



THE INDEPENDENT

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IN THIS SECTION
Vanessa: not all that she seems PAGE 3



Deborah Orr: the truth about cheap pills PAGE 5
IN THE FRIDAY REVIEW

SELF-DRIVE TO PARIS FROM £39
INCLUDES TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION
SEE PAGE 27

Two of Lawrence murder gang could be innocent, police say

BY KATHY MARKS

TWO OF the five men widely regarded as prime suspects for Stephen Lawrence's murder could be innocent, police believe. Detectives have decided that Gary Dobson and Luke Knight were probably not part of the racist gang that stabbed to death the black teenager in Eltham, south-east London, in April 1993.

This startling conclusion overturns long-held assumptions about the identity of the murderers, and means that as many as three other suspects could be prosecuted for the killing.

Duwayne Brooks, Stephen's friend and the main witness, told police in his first statement about the attack that it was carried out by six white youths. Other witnesses have suggested that there may have been six, rather than five, people involved.

Detectives are now focusing their attention on several local men who were known associates in 1993 of the remaining three - Jamie Acourt, his brother, Neil, and David Norris.

They are also examining allegations that some of the suspects may have been involved in a series of violent attacks carried out in the area in the year before Stephen was killed.

The cases include the stabbing of a white teenager, Darren Witham, in May 1992, and an incident in November 1992 in which a black youth, Kevin London, was allegedly threatened with a knife in Eltham.

Mr Dobson and Mr Knight, both 23, stood trial with Neil Acourt at the Old Bailey in 1996 after the Lawrence family



Police now say Gary Dobson (left) and Luke Knight may not have been part of the killer gang, but Neil and Jamie Acourt and David Norris are still prime suspects



mounted a private prosecution against the five. They were acquitted of murder on the judge's direction after Mr Brooks's evidence was ruled unreliable.

All five of the original suspects were branded murderers two years ago on the front page of the Daily Mail.

John Grieve, one of Scotland Yard's most experienced detectives, who took over as head of the Lawrence murder squad a fortnight ago, has said that he

is challenging all previous assumptions about the case. The Acourts and Mr Norris are still regarded as prime suspects. Jamie Acourt, 22, and Mr Norris, 23, have never stood trial for Stephen's murder, but - because of widespread publicity - could not receive a fair hearing. Recent reports suggesting that the three acquitted in 1996 could face other charges have been dismissed by legal experts.

In 1993, the Acourts and Mr Norris were the prime movers in a gang that had a shifting membership of up to a dozen youths united by violent and racist tendencies and, in some cases, by blood relations.

Mr Knight was a particular friend of Jamie's, while Mr Dobson was close to Neil. The five had known each other for years. Police were given the names of the five by local informants in the early days after Stephen's

murder. But they were also given the names of several other youths in the Acourts' gang. Detectives believe that it may now prove fruitful to scrutinise some of the earlier incidents of violence.

One detective said: "The question is: how do you isolate the murder of Stephen? Is it an isolated incident, or is it part of a composite series of events?"

Darren Witham claims that he was stabbed in the arm by David Norris outside a shop in Chislehurst, south-east London. He says that he was trying to help his older brother, Terry, who was being attacked by a group that allegedly included Jamie Acourt.

Mr Norris was charged with the stabbing. Mr Acourt with possession of a truncheon. But the Crown Prosecution Service dropped the charges in early 1993, before Stephen was killed. Kevin London, a black youth,

claims that he was threatened in Eltham by a group that included Mr Dobson and Neil Acourt. He alleged in a documentary screened last week that Neil Acourt lunged at him with a knife.

As well as looking at these and other cases, Mr Grieve's squad is planning to revisit potential witnesses and informants in Eltham who did not co-operate with the original police investigation of Stephen's murder.

Detectives believe that allegiances have changed over the past six years, and that women in particular - ex-girlfriends, sisters and mothers - may now be willing to help police.

New scientific techniques mean that it may also be worthwhile to submit forensic evidence to further tests.

Mr Knight was picked out at an identification parade by Mr Brooks in June 1993. Mr Dobson attended parades, but was not picked out.

The police surveillance video shot at Mr Dobson's flat in late 1994 shows both men taking part in conversations peppered with racist abuse.

However, Mr Dobson, who is believed to have had black friends, shows less enthusiasm. At one point he says that "some (blacks) are all right", to which Neil Acourt replies that black people are "cunt".

Mr Dobson and Mr Knight are the only two of the group who answered questions when they were arrested. Both told police that they were at home on the night of the murder, which was corroborated by their parents. Mr Dobson later added that he went out shortly before midnight to visit the Acourts.

At one time, Mr Dobson was regarded by detectives as a possible "weak link" who might crack under pressure and give them information.

Mr Knight's family used to live in Well Hall Road, the street where Stephen was attacked. Police believe that the gang came across Mr Brooks and Stephen after emerging from Mr Knight's house - but they now think Mr Knight stayed at home.

Clinton off the hook without even a rebuke

AFTER MORE than a year of anxiety, President Bill Clinton looked set last night to be liberated from the Monica Lewinsky scandal. As the US Senate prepared to vote on his fate within hours, all the signs were that a majority of senators would vote to acquit him.

With three Republican defections announced and others still possible, the prospect that there might not be even 50 votes for conviction was causing the right of the Republican Party to quake. Democrats forecast that a third of the 100 senators might vote to convict on the first of the two Articles of Impeachment, perjury. The vote on the second count, ob-

struction of justice, was expected to be closer.

But, if the 55 Republicans cannot muster even 51 of their own, the President will not only be secure, he will be vindicated. And some Democrats have already drawn their conclusions. "I think it sends a very loud message to the House of Representatives: Don't ever send to the Senate again Articles of Impeachment that are this weak and partisan," said Senator Tim Johnson, from South Dakota.

The comprehensiveness of

Mr Clinton's expected victory was reinforced by reports that the move for a formal censure was fading fast. With deliberations held behind closed doors, there was little information about the mood of the Chamber. But the fierce lobbying for and against censure heard earlier in the week was not in evidence.

The White House, meanwhile, mindful of the criticism that followed their defiant rejection of the House impeachment vote before Christmas, has pledged to be a "gloat-free zone" once the trial is over. That promise, however, does not extend to other Democrats, who plan a series of celebrations around Washington. Mr Clinton



Clinton: Survives scandal

himself planned to make a televised statement immediately after the verdict to acknowledge the pain the Lewinsky affair caused, and outline plans for the remainder of his term.

He will also meet Republican Congressional leaders to stress the need to work together and let bygones be bygones. Starr to face inquiry, page 16

Four arrested in Premiership match-rigging investigation

FOUR MEN have been arrested as part of a wide-ranging inquiry into the suspected rigging of Premiership football matches, police revealed last night.

The men, one Briton and three foreign nationals, were held on suspicion of burglary at the ground of Charlton Athletic Football Club in south London, Scotland Yard said.

The Football Association and the Metropolitan Police's Organised Crime Squad were investigating suspected damage to electrical equipment. One of the men arrested was a security guard at the ground.

Detectives are thought to be investigating links with football matches affected by floodlight

failures. A police spokeswoman said: "We have been given by the FA a list of previous games where the power supply has failed. There have been failures during a number of high-profile Premiership matches."

Far East gambling syndicates were accused in December 1997 of arranging a floodlight failure at a televised Premier League match. Scotland Yard detectives were investigating the power failure at the Wimbledon versus Arsenal game at Selhurst Park, which followed previous problems at Derby and West Ham in the

same season. The lights went off at the start of the second half when the score was 0-0.

Charlton Athletic are due to play Liverpool in a Premier League match tomorrow.

A single Premiership match can be worth millions of pounds to a Far East betting syndicate, and, as far as some bets are concerned, as soon as the game has passed the half-way mark the result stands even if it ends prematurely.

A spokesman for the bookmaker William Hill said the same rules do not apply in Britain. "Domestically, all bets are void if a match is abandoned, you keep your stake money but it's impossible to

make any money," he said. "There were suspicions in the Eighties that floodlights were deliberately tampered with, and at that time the outcome of an abandoned game stayed for betting purposes." He said the rules were designed to guard against any wrong-doing to prevent a match being completed.

The FA said last night: "We've provided the police with a list of previous floodlight failures. But they assure us it is too early to link such incidents to this case or to allegations of connections between football and gambling. Football is determined to play its part in helping the police... The integrity of the game is crucial."

INSIDE THIS SECTION

New fat cat row looms
Barclays signed a new American chief executive for £15.3m over three years.
Home P2

Row with Spain deepens
Angry MPs called for a gunboat to be sent to Gibraltar.
Home P4

New moves on Euro
Tony Blair has ordered ministers to be more positive about the single currency.
Home P5

Marlboro maker sued
Philip Morris is told to pay \$50m to lung cancer sufferers.
Foreign P15

Troops on alert
British troops were put on alert last night for deployment on Kosovo peacekeeping duties in Kosovo.
Foreign P17

Another Chamonix body
Body of eleventh avalanche victim was recovered.
Foreign P19

Shell profits fall
Royal Dutch/Shell pledged to keep dividends high despite its worst ever results.
Business P20

Keegan takes lead
Kevin Keegan emerged as favourite for the England job.
Sport P32

INSIDE THE REVIEW

Donald MacIntyre
The Government's new Bill is just the beginning of welfare reform.
Comment P3

Philip Hensher
How come everyone's crazy for Proust?
Comment P4

Mark Steel
You can tell a good match by listening to your neighbours.
Features P8

Foreign Office
The most undiplomatic architects in town.
Architecture P9

9 770951 546559
TODAY'S TELEVISION
BACK PAGE

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD	
Australia	6.90
Belgium	10.50
Canada	3.50
France	1.20
Germany	1.20
Italy	1.20
Japan	1.20
Spain	1.20
USA	1.20
UK	1.20

HOME 2-14, FOREIGN 15-19, BUSINESS 20-25, UNIT TRUSTS 22, SHARES 24, SPORT 25-32, CRIPIC CROSSWORD 26, WEATHER 2

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO STAYING IN AND GOING OUT IN THE WEEK AHEAD

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■ PLUS
ANNA PAVORD IN
THE GARDEN

WHAT JOHN LE
CARRÉ DID NEXT

A black and white photograph of a man in a suit and tie standing in front of a wall with a clock. The man is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The clock is round with Roman numerals and is mounted on the wall above the man's head. The image has a high-contrast, grainy quality.

Rank	City	Population	Rank	City	Population
1	Dubai	1 643	11	Manila	1 398
2	London	2 611	12	Manila	1 398
3	London	2 611	13	Mecca	1 294
4	London	2 611	14	Madras	1 294
5	London	2 611	15	Madras	1 294
6	London	2 611	16	Madras	1 294
7	London	2 611	17	Madras	1 294
8	London	2 611	18	Madras	1 294
9	London	2 611	19	Madras	1 294
10	London	2 611	20	Madras	1 294
11	London	2 611	21	Madras	1 294
12	London	2 611	22	Madras	1 294
13	London	2 611	23	Madras	1 294
14	London	2 611	24	Madras	1 294
15	London	2 611	25	Madras	1 294
16	London	2 611	26	Madras	1 294
17	London	2 611	27	Madras	1 294
18	London	2 611	28	Madras	1 294
19	London	2 611	29	Madras	1 294
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76	London	2 611	86	Madras	1 294
77	London	2 611			

هكذا من اللطيف

CRISIS ON THE ROCK

Send gunboat to Spain, demand Tories

CALLS FOR A gunboat to be sent to Gibraltar were made yesterday in the House of Commons by MPs on both sides, as a Foreign Office minister faced angry demands for Britain to resist Spanish pressure.

The Government condemned the Spanish authorities for taking retaliatory action over a fishing dispute by banning cars with Gibraltar licence plates

by COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

from Spanish roads and preventing any flights to the territory from crossing Spanish air space, as MPs warned ministers against any attempt to bargain away the Rock's sovereignty. The latest row over Gibraltar, which has been rumbling for years, was sparked

after the Spanish Foreign Minister, Abel Matutes, repudiated a local settlement to end a dispute on fishing rights and retaliated by enforcing checks on traffic across the border.

MPs called on the Government to send a fisheries protection vessel to the colony. Andrew Mackinlay, the Labour MP for Thurrock, said the Government had been "far too soft

for years' with the Spanish over Gibraltar.

Labour's Lindsay Hoyle said that two of his Chorley constituents were trapped for 13 hours on the Spanish side of the border, neither able to go into Spain nor back into Gibraltar.

He said: "Hasn't the time come for a protection vessel to go down there?"

To Conservative cheers, Mr

Hoyle added: "Let's take the kid gloves off."

Joyce Quin, the Foreign Office minister, who had to face the anger of MPs, confirmed that a Spanish plan for joint sovereignty of the Rock is to be discussed by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary as part of the so-called Brussels framework.

But Ms Quin said, protests would be made by Britain to

Jacques Santer, the EU President, to intervene.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman later denied that sovereignty over Gibraltar was on the table. "There is no change whatever in our position on Gibraltar. The Spanish appear to be saying that there is some discussion that led them to believe there was some change in our position over

the fishing dispute and that is not the case." The spokesman said Tony Blair's personal relationship with Jose Maria Aznar, the Spanish Prime Minister and the leader of the Socialists, Labour's sister party in Spain was warm, "but there is no denying there is a problem".

Officials in Gibraltar said the Spanish retaliatory action was worse than under General

Franco. Peter Caruana, the chief minister, said: "The people of Gibraltar are determined to stand firm against these unEuropean undemocratic attempts to force Gibraltar to accept Spanish sovereignty."

"The EU Commission cannot remain impassive in the face of such serious and blatant disregard of Spain's EU obligations and our EU rights."

Trapped by the Siege of Gibraltar

MARY GARCIA, 37, a feisty Gibraltarian with a British passport, sounded puffed and harassed after pounding up the stairs of her flat near Castle Ramp in pursuit of one of her six children who had gone walkabout. She crosses to Spain every day, as does her Spanish husband, Ramon, who works in his father's bar in La Linea, just across the border.

But yesterday, with lunch-time queues lasting three and a half hours or more – some said they had waited up to six hours – Mary didn't even try. "These last few days the Spanish Guardia Civil have been strengthened, so yesterday instead of nodding us regular pedestrians through as they usually do, they checked our passports, turning over page after page, and searched us to see if we were smuggling tobacco. It's a bother when you're with children. I'll have to go tomorrow for the weekend shopping. I'm dreading it."

Mary speaks in rapid Andalus, punching the occasional English word – "shopping" – into the torrent of speech, like most Gibraltarians.

Her neighbour Tracy Spiteri was more forthright. "We feel besieged. What happened when the Algeiras fishermen block-

by ELIZABETH NASH

aded the border last week was a siege, and in a late 20th-century Europe that's supposed to have open frontiers. And now Matutes threatens even more restrictions. He's gone berserk." She snorted in disgust.

Tracy's husband, Charlie, "did tobacco" in easier days when Gibraltarian authorities turned a blind eye to nightly trips by fast launches carrying crates of Winston cigarettes to deserted Spanish beaches. That stopped when the Foreign Office threatened direct rule on the colony unless Gibraltar cleaned up its act. The sight of black rubber fast dinghies bobbing in the marina, waiting for a smuggling run across the straits, is a distant memory. Even Madrid concedes that Gibraltar is no longer a red-hot conduit for drug or tobacco smuggling, despite the body searches inflicted upon Mary.

After the tobacco runs ended, Charlie was desperate for work, handing out leaflets for a restaurant to make ends meet for Tracy and their four children. She recalls Charlie's enforced idleness with bitterness. "You'd think that with the thousands of Spaniards who come every day to work on the Rock, they'd find



A policeman watching motorcyclists waiting to cross the border from Spain to Gibraltar yesterday

a job for Charlie, who's Gibraltarian born and bred."

But now, she says, with evident pride, "he's got a stable job in the local dockyard. He's had it for six months now."

"Siege mentality" is no mere figure of speech in this British colony born as a fortress, where a joint French and Spanish siege in 1779 lasted two years and ended in Gibraltarian victory. Street names and pub boards are all that remain of Britain's military legacy since

the MoD in recent years wound down its operations to almost nothing.

But old loyalties burn bright. Jane Howard, owner of the Cannon Bar, down crooked, cobbled Cannon Lane, said yesterday: "We talk of nothing else but border problems and our bitterness with Madrid, and everyone comes in here, from building workers to dentists."

"I've had customers this morning complaining they've been caught in a Catch 22, with

this new passport ruling, because if you've got a Gibraltar-registered car, you have to carry a GIB passport to drive it."

"They're even stopping motorbikes now, poring over every piece of paper you offer them."

Christine Ryan, an Englishwoman who has lived on the rock for 12 years, came into the bar, having braved the border crossing to buy a piece of trimming for a cushion. "It's such a pain. Those queuing were mostly foreign or Spanish

who'd got caught trying to go home. The atmosphere is the worst I've known it."

Andrew Hoare, whose family has run the sports shop in Main Street for three generations, has seen business drop this week. He sighed wearily. "We've been through this before under Franco. It's just another siege. My grandfather survived the war. My father survived the closure of the frontier, and I'm having to go through it all again. It turns us against Spain."

Why has Madrid blockaded now?

So Spain is making a fuss about Gibraltar again. What's the problem this time?

Ostensibly, Spain is angry that Gibraltar has directly settled a fishing rights dispute with local Spanish fishermen. Madrid insists that all such matters should be handled by itself and the British Government, and says it had a verbal agreement with Robin Cook to that effect. In reality, the row is the latest chapter of a Spanish war of attrition to retake Gibraltar.

How long has this war been going on?

Since the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 ceded the Rock to Britain, Spanish pride has never come to terms with the loss of a chunk of mainland territory (imagine what we would feel if Bristol, say, was part of Spain). Things were especially fraught under General Franco. He sealed the land frontier in 1969. The blockade lasted until 1985.

Isn't the whole thing a bit of an anachronism today? You might easily think so.

After all, Franco died in 1975. Spain is a democracy and, like Britain, belongs to a European Union within which such national squabbles are supposed to become irrelevant. What's being done to settle the problem? Abel Matutes, the Spanish Foreign Minister, tabled Madrid's most recent

proposals in December 1997, based on the proposition that Spain seeks sovereignty over only the land, not the people, of Gibraltar. The plan calls for an unspecified period of joint sovereignty, after which Gibraltar would return to Spain. But the people would be able to retain British citizenship and enjoy special tax status. The colony would gain devolved powers and enjoy autonomy comparable to that of Catalonia.

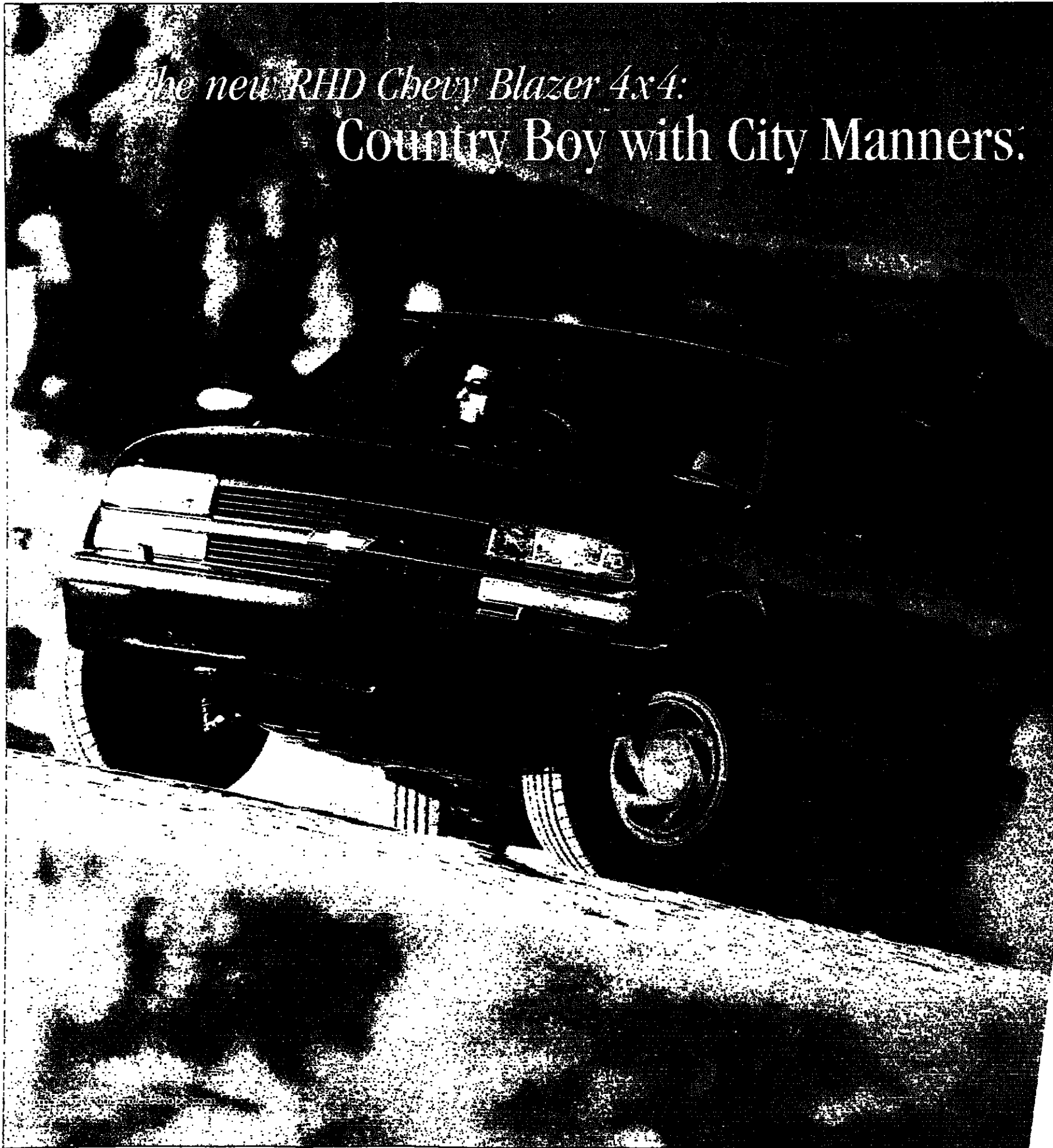
What's wrong with that? Nothing – except that the Gibraltarians won't hear of it: 98 per cent of them want to stay part of the UK. Their main gripe is that they're a colony, and would like to become a crown dependency, like the Channel Islands. And, as the Foreign Office never tires of repeating, the Government will not act without the consent of the 30,000 Gibraltarians.

Of course, Spain wouldn't have any tiny overseas territories which it is being asked to give back, would it?

As a matter of fact, it does. Morocco would dearly like to take possession of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the North African coast. But Madrid argues that when they were captured (in 1580 and 1497) Morocco didn't exist. So how can Morocco ask for them "back"? RUPERT CORNWELL

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CHEVROLET.

and Tories

Why has Madrid blockaded now?

Ministers are told to take pro-euro line

TONY BLAIR has ordered his ministers to adopt a more positive stance on the single currency as the Government prepares to issue a firm "declaration of intent" to join the euro.

A new briefing note for Labour figures appearing on television and radio programmes says that "Europe can only get more important for Britain" and that "a successful single currency would be beneficial to Britain" if the economic case for joining were clear.

The document, issued by Labour's Millbank headquarters, says the "top line answer" to questions about the party's policy on the single currency should be: "A strong euro, particularly accompanied by economic reform in Europe, will bring clear economic benefits to Europe. A successful euro will also benefit Britain."

In two weeks, the Government will step up another gear by publishing a National Changeover Plan outlining the steps Britain would need to take in order to join the euro.

BY ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

It will say that the transitional period could be shorter than the three years it took other EU members who launched the currency last month, as Britain could learn lessons from their experiences.

The plan, to be unveiled by Gordon Brown, will be accompanied by a warm welcome from Mr Blair. They have been holding talks about the document and the statements they will both issue alongside it.

It is understood that the Prime Minister is keener than the Chancellor to adopt a more positive approach to the euro, in order to maximise Britain's influence in the EU while it remains outside the currency.

They are expected to reach a compromise under which the Government adopts "warmer words" without changing the policy announced by Mr Brown in October 1997.

This set out five economic tests that would have to be passed before Labour recommended membership and

called a referendum, which was effectively ruled out until after the next General Election.

Under the compromise, Mr Blair could announce that Britain "intends to join" the euro once the tests are met, but would reject pressure from businessmen to set a target date for joining.

Mr Brown believes that a major departure from existing policy could unsettle the markets, and that naming a date at this stage would be too risky.

The Labour briefing document, passed to *The Independent*, has been welcomed by pro-EU ministers but has raised eyebrows among those who are sceptical about the single currency because it lists the advantages of the euro without mentioning any of the potential downsides.

Mr Brown briefed the Cabinet yesterday on the economic background to his March 9 Budget.

He sought to reassure his colleagues that Britain would avoid recession, despite the Bank of England's decision to cut its growth forecast.



Mr Hague visiting a class of second-graders in East Harlem yesterday: 'Is he from the same country as the Spice Girls?' asked one

'Who is this guy?' ask children as Hague comes to Harlem

AFRIENDLY British man visited Junior High School 99 in East Harlem yesterday. It is doubtful any child had a clue who he was, except for seeing that he was somehow important because of the television crew at his heels. "What channel is it? Hi Mum!" said one excited seven-year-old. "Is he from the same country as the Spice Girls?" asked another.

This was no celebrity, however - not on this side of the Atlantic, at least. The camera crew, moreover, was recording the scene for the BBC, a channel not widely watched in Spanish Harlem. And while the American press had been invited, no editor in New York City had apparently deemed the event worth covering.

Our man, a certain William Hague, leader of the Opposition, was not to be deterred. Soon, he was plunging into a seventh-

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York

grade cookery class, helping a bemused Chante Essie, 14, to cut meat strips. "This could end in disaster," Mr Hague admitted, grasping the plastic cutlery. "Politicians need sharp knives."

This was day one of Mr Hague's Compassionate Conservatism North American Tour. It is a four-day sojourn around the US - to New York, Washington and Texas (where he will today meet Governor George Bush jun) and then to Toronto. Travelling with him, on

a rare public foray, is his wife, Ffion. Yesterday began with a breakfast of conservative sages, hosted by the former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, whose other guests included the chiefs of ABC television, *Time* and *Newsweek* (who still did not see fit to dispatch reporters).

The school was precisely up Mr Hague's street. With 1,100 students it is, in fact, four schools in one building that has been heralded as a model of innovative education. It is a magnet to parents because it has been largely freed from the

centralised curriculum of the city and state.

From this, Mr Hague derived an important message. "They say there has been a miracle in East Harlem," he explained grandly at the conclusion of the tour. "Well, we need a miracle to happen in Britain too." And that, he said, meant reversing the centralising impulses of the Labour Government and cutting through "regulations". Then it was off to the private jet provided to the Hagues by tycoon Irvine Laidlaw.

The students, meanwhile, remained baffled. Chante shook

her head politely when asked by a reporter who this man and his pretty wife had been. "I don't know," she said. "But he seemed nice."

Mr Hague claimed last night that his party did not deserve to win the next election unless it put "compassion" and care for the poor at the heart of its policies. In a set-piece speech to the Washington Press Club, billed as his "Right Way" alternative to Tony Blair's "Third Way", Mr Hague said the Conservatives should use freedom of choice to rescue the less well-off from over-centralised government.

ANC snub for Mandelson

THE VISIT of the former cabinet minister Peter Mandelson to South Africa erupted into an embarrassing row yesterday as it emerged his trip was largely funded by a trade union.

Despite his view there should be a split between Labour and unions, Mr Mandelson accepted backing for the trip from the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, channelled through the Labour Party.

Ken Jackson, leader of the AEEU, said he was approached to help. "We are not paying Peter Mandelson, we are paying the party to provide Peter's expertise," said a spokesman. It is understood the union pro-

BY BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

vided £1,200, which would cover the air fare.

There was also confusion yesterday over why Mr Mandelson was there. Labour insisted the trip followed an invitation from the African National Congress, which was seeking advice on its strategy for the forthcoming elections.

However, a senior ANC spokesman said it had not invited the former secretary of state for trade and industry and it did not need his advice. Thabo Masebe, of the ANC, told *The World at One* on Radio 4 that Mr

Mandelson had requested a meeting with officials and out of courtesy they had agreed to it.

Asked if the ANC would be seeking advice on electoral strategy, he said: "No, we will not."

Labour later released a letter from Mendi Mtshang, the ANC treasurer general, to Margaret McDonough, Labour's general secretary, last month "confirming our interest in taking up your party's offer... to release Mr Peter Mandelson to come out to South Africa for the specific purpose of assisting us in the... elections campaign".

Mr Mandelson said it was "absolutely ridiculous" to say his visit was unexpected.

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Howard works himself into a war-like froth on the Rock

THE PHRASE "gunboat diplomacy" would understate Michael Howard's policy on the Spanish blockade of Gibraltar as he responded to the emergency statement by the Foreign Office minister Joyce Quin yesterday.

Flanked by an unusually high turn-out of Tory MPs, Mr Howard launched a typically over-the-top attack on the Government, which stopped only just short of a call to arms. Diplomacy is hardly Mr Howard's style and he lost no opportunity to create a drama out of the crisis. He ranted and raved about the Government's failure to "condemn unreservedly the Span-

ish action" and suspected that the blockade had occurred because of a long-standing dastardly plot by the Foreign Office to persuade ministers to adopt Spanish plans for joint sovereignty of the Rock.

Getting carried away at the extent of his own rhetoric, Mr Howard bombarded Ms Quin with the charges of "U-turn, equivocation, retreat and surrender". If Mr Howard had been anywhere near holding ministerial office yesterday he would, by now, have plunged the world into nuclear war.

Ms Quin replied that Britain has a good relationship with Spain and attacked Mr Howard's "fire and

brimstone". She replied sniffily that Mr Howard had broken the cross-party agreement on Gibraltar and pointed out that the Government had merely continued the policy it inherited from the previous administration when Tristan (now Lord) Garel-Jones was the Tory minister responsible for the Rock.

The naming of Lord Garel-Jones in complimentary terms by Ms Quin failed to calm Tories. In fact already belligerent opposition MPs now went ballistic and were in a state of uncontrollable frenzy at the mere mention of his name. The words traitor and treachery were quickly on the lips of Tory MPs

THE SKETCH



MICHAEL BROWN

whose hatred of Lord Garel-Jones remains undimmed for his part in the downfall of Margaret Thatcher. But Mr Howard's attack went

down well with his troops. Michael Colvin (C, Romney and Walsdale) followed with a demand for the dispatch of a "fisheries protection vessel", but he might have preferred a gunboat.

Even Labour MPs caught the warmongering bug and were somewhat disappointed at Ms Quin's desire to resolve the issue through tedious diplomatic channels. David Winnick (Lab, Walsall North), said it was "deplorable that the Spanish government is reverting to the provocative attitude of Franco".

Lindsay Hoyle (Lab, Chorley) foamed at the mouth because he had constituents trapped between

the Spanish and Gibraltar borders. A case, if ever there was, of being caught between a rock and a hard place. Sir Teddy Taylor (C, Southend East) and John Wilkinson (C, Ruislip Northwood) used the opportunity to fight their own battles against Europe in general and Spain in particular. Sir Teddy warned that Spain would ignore all directives from the European Commission to behave properly, while Mr Wilkinson wanted an economic blockade against Spain, suggesting that because the UK was a net contributor to Europe and Spain was a net recipient, Britain should cut off all money to Europe.

Ms Quin's attempt to jaw-jaw did not match the cross-party desire for war-war and the Commons mood was summed up by Andrew Tyrie (C, Chichester) who thought her attitude smacked of appeasement. "The Spanish only understand strength. They bullfight while the Foreign Office plays cricket."

No doubt at this very moment Labour Party spin-doctors and focus groups are putting their fingers to the wind to see if public opinion would like a good dust-up with Spain. If so, Mr Blair will be at the head of the battle and Ms Quin will be off the case.

Thomas Sutcliffe is away

Public Trust Office to face full inquiry

SOME OF society's most vulnerable people may have become victims of fraud because of failings in a government agency, the public finance watchdog said last night.

The Public Trust Office, which has responsibility for £1.45bn belonging to 22,000 people who suffer from mental incapacity, is to be reviewed. Relatives are appointed as receivers for 19,500 of the patients, while the affairs of the rest are looked after by the trust office.

The National Audit Office found the agency failed to act when accounts prepared by relatives arrived late, left unacceptable long gaps between visits and levied administration fees that were too high. Most of the patients whose relatives failed to file accounts had no insurance against fraud. "We believe the absence of both accounts and insurance may put some patients' assets at particular risk... we believe there is insufficient information to judge the possible level of undetected abuse," the NAO report said.

MENTAL HEALTH

BY FRANK ABRAMS

Westminster Correspondent

Nine out of 10 accounts were submitted late. In one case, the NAO found that a patient's sister received £2,600 to fund a holiday for him, herself and two other relatives even though her accounts were nine months late.

An 84-year-old paranoid schizophrenic who had an annual income of just £4,000 was charged £800 in fees.

Charities and MPs have been concerned about the agency for many years. The Commons Public Accounts Committee called for reforms in 1994 but the new NAO report found that few had been implemented.

Ginny Jenkins, director of Action on Elder Abuse, said her charity knew of a man suffering from alcoholic dementia whose daughter was given charge of his affairs. She was allowed to use the money to buy her father a part-share in a pub, losing £20,000 in the process. His two sons did not even find out what

had happened until it was too late. "The trust office are being notified that there are concerns. That results in people losing money to fraud," she said.

David Faber, Conservative MP for Westbury, has campaigned on the issue since being approached by a constituent whose father was placed in the care of a relative by the trust office without his knowledge. By the time he found out, money had gone missing.

The NAO made 27 separate recommendations for improvements, including closer monitoring of family receivers, sanctions for the late filing of accounts and improved arrangements for visiting patients.

It also said the agency should review its fees and make efforts to improve the performance of its investment programmes for patients' capital.

Geoff Hoon, Minister of State in the Lord Chancellor's department, said the review would look at alternative options for carrying out the work that the trust office did.



Private Joe Ross, 24, was at the launch yesterday of the Territorial Army's latest recruitment campaign at the Ministry of Defence in London. The campaign features photographs of Private Ross

Agency attacked over Dome

MILLENNIUM DOME
BY PETER WOODMAN

THE GOVERNMENT agency that owns the land on which the £758m Millennium Dome is built was criticised yesterday by MPs for appearing "too open-minded" about the Dome's future use.

Executives of the regeneration agency English Partnerships told the Commons Culture Committee nobody had devised a complete package for the Dome after it closes to the public at the end of 2000. They added that a number of future uses were being considered but nothing had been decided.

The committee chairman, Gerald Kaufman, told the chief executive of English Partnerships, Paula May-Plumb: "I am very concerned about your telling me how open-minded you are. I fear the building will be a vacant shell."

She replied: "I believe it will be wrong to interpret our open-mindedness as a lack of concern. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that future use of the Dome fits in with the long-term regeneration of the Greenwich Peninsula."

English Partnerships projects director, David Shelton, said that among potential uses for the Dome were leisure, sports, conventions and conferences. It could be kept as an exhibition space or used as the centre of a development project. He said: "Having the Dome as a retail site would not be appropriate, nor would it be appropriate to use it for pop concerts twice a week or for anything too trivial." It was difficult to get credible proposals until it was demonstrated how transport links would work.

In evidence to the committee, the Docklands Forum, which embraces 500 organisations in the Docklands and Thames Gateway areas, gave the results of a questionnaire it had circulated in Greenwich. Among the options proposed for the Dome were an ecological water park, an art centre, education centre and a museum. The forum said: "It is clear that most people want it to become a cultural centre of lasting value... not just another commercial development."

Labour to privatise membership service

NEW LABOUR is about to embark on the ultimate privatisation. The party is preparing to call in the private sector to recruit, retain and service its 390,000 members.

To the anger of left-wingers and trade unionists, the Blairites who run Labour's Millbank headquarters in London have won approval for the party's membership system to be contracted out to a private company.

Pete Willsman, a left-wing member of Labour's national executive committee, raised with horror the prospect that Tory activists employed by an outside contractor could

handle Labour's membership activities.

But despite left-wing criticism, the NEC agreed by 20 votes to four to commission a feasibility study into contracting out the work and boost Labour's recruitment effort.

In a confidential report, Margaret McDonagh, Labour's ultra-Blairite general secretary, told the NEC the party had blazed a trail in 1988 by becoming the first in Britain to set up a centralised membership service. Before that, Labour HQ

did not even know how many members it had or how to contact them.

"Whilst acknowledging the success of centralising the records, it is recognised that the system we now have is slow, unwieldy and unreliable," Ms McDonagh said.

The report, leaked to *The Independent*, said the challenge for Labour was to provide a "quality membership service" and action was needed now to put it in place for the build up to the next general election.

Payments to the private firm that wins the contract would be met from a £4m increase in Labour's budget this year.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Slaughter cost

THE ESTIMATED cost of the Government's scheme to slaughter cattle over 30 months, launched after the BSE scare, was £364m in the past year, the Agriculture minister Jeff Rooker disclosed.

Disabled aid

FOOTBALL CLUBS will have to consult disabled groups on the facilities in new stands on their grounds or be denied government grants to help to build them, Chris Smith, the Culture, Media and Sport Secretary, announced.

Care problem

FEWER THAN half Britain's employees have access to childcare at work despite the Government's efforts to promote "family friendly" policies, the education and employment minister Margaret Hodge admitted.

Beckett concedes on Sierra Leone

THE STORM over Tony Blair's dismissal of MPs' findings on the arms-to-Sierra Leone affair deepened yesterday, as Margaret Beckett, the Leader of the House of Commons, conceded that the Government may have reacted too quickly.

Responding to MPs' protests about the Prime Minister's criticism of the damning Foreign Affairs Select Committee's report, Mrs Beckett said: "I share some of the concern about over-speedy reaction to Select Committee reports, which certainly ought to be weighed carefully by all in this House."

But, she added: "If the Opposition continues the practice of preceding every select committee report with a demand immediately for the resignation of the relevant minister, then it is only natural that government ministers are also likely to respond. Perhaps we can each encourage our colleagues not to pre-judge reports before they are published."

And she warned Tories that it would "create difficulties" if they used such reports "simply as a sort of ram" against the Government.

The Prime Minister came under fierce attack by William

SELECT COMMITTEES
BY SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

Hague earlier this week for his "arrogance and contempt" after he said the committee's findings that civil servants had failed in their duty were "disproportionate and unfair".

In the Commons, MPs insisted the report went much further in its criticism than last year's inquiry by Sir Thomas Legg, accusing the Government of rejecting the findings before studying them.

Sir Peter Emery, the Tory MP for Devon East, said that the report "goes into the way in which Parliament actually can hold the executive to account".

Crispin Blunt, the Conservative MP for Reigate and a member of the Defence Select Committee, said Doug Henderson, the Defence minister, had criticised their report on TA cuts without knowing its full details. He said the Government's handling of the reports showed there was something "seriously wrong in the Executive about its attitudes to committees of this House".

Mrs Beckett replied: "I utterly reject what you say."

THE HOUSE



Misquote anger

BARONESS YOUNG of Old Scone, the chairman of English Nature, was said to be "very angry" after Cabinet Office Minister, Jack Cunningham, apparently misquoted a confidential briefing note on advice to impose a three-year ban on some genetically modified crops.

Education cash

LABOUR BACKBENCHERS joined Tory criticisms of the "anomalies" and "unfairness" in the formula for distribution of education cash to councils.

'Funding crisis'

MINISTERS CAME under Tory attack for causing a funding crisis in schools through "interventionist" policies. Shadow education secretary, David Willetts, said councils were not given enough information to set school's budgets.

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IN BRIEF

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The Chancellor is finding extra cash for

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BT staff lead millennium pay stampede



Train drivers
Health workers
Both professions will be seeking a bonus of £500 per shift for Millennium Eve



GMB general union
service sector workers
Earn between £4 and £6 an hour in London. Claiming quadruple time



Computer programmers
Freelances on £40,000 to £80,000 demanding £1,000 an hour to tackle the millennium bug



Acting profession
Equity believes that top entertainers will receive as much as £10,000 for one night's work



Security staff
They are likely to be paid up to £50 an hour for the Millennium Eve - more than 10 times the normal rate



BT telephonists, engineers
Receive £20,000-£30,000 a year, or £10 to £15 an hour. To be paid up to eight times normal hourly pay



Walters at the more up-market restaurants
in London, they earn £10 to £20 an hour. Seeking £1,000 for a shift



Musical entertainers
Dinner-dance musicians normally earn £150 a night. Will be demanding 10 times their normal fee

TRAIN DRIVERS joined the growing clamour yesterday for big bonuses for working during the millennium celebrations. The drivers' union Aslef is to demand one-off payments of at least £500 for working on New Year's Eve on the following day. The claim follows the disclosure that BT staff will be paid up to eight times their normal hourly rates for working on 31 December and 1 January. Officials at Aslef believe train operators will need to run full timetables at the end of the year and there may even be pressure for additional services for millennium revellers. The union argues that train companies should use volunteers only and therefore there needs to be "substantial" financial incentive. Many London Underground drivers have told the union they will refuse to work. "We will have to do a deal. Most people want the time off. They won't work for peanuts," said an Aslef spokesman.

Some hotels, restaurants and pub chains have decided the rates being demanded by staff make it impossible to open. At the most upmarket establishments, waiters are seeking £1,000 for a single shift, while freelance information technology specialists believe they can command that much per hour because of the dangers of the millennium bug. Management at BT - Britain's biggest private sector employer - have clearly set a more realistic target for employees in other companies. BT will be offering massive bonuses to a wide range of staff from telephonists to engineers who volunteer to work. The BT employees will receive the usual 2.5 times their normal rate on New Year's Eve and the day after, plus an additional £55 an hour - about eight times the normal rate for those on £10 an hour. For working the four days around Christmas they will get an extra £15 an hour on top of the premium rate. For the two days in between the holidays, 29 and 30 December, staff will receive normal hourly pay with an additional £15 an hour on top. That means that a £30,000 a year engineer could earn up to

£3,500 for working through the Christmas and new year period. Three of the country's biggest unions, the Transport and General, GMB and Unison, with hundreds of thousands of members in the service sector, which will be staffed 24 hours a day, declared their intention to use the BT bonuses as a target in negotiations. Paul Kenny, the GMB's London regional secretary, said his union would be using settlement won by the Communication Workers Union (CWU) at BT as a target. "They've struck a sensible deal, good luck to them. I'm in the middle of negotiating similar agreements in a range of industries. The deal

at BT will give me a lot of ammunition." A spokesman at public service union Unison said the tens of thousands of its members would be expected to work during the celebrations: "Our members drive ambulances, run hospitals and work in utilities which will have to keep the lights on. They all deserve big bonuses for working during the millennium. I believe our people should get as much, if not more than BT staff." The Transport and General also believed the agreement won by the CWU would act as a precedent. An official said: "I'm sure our members will be saying, 'We'll have some of that'."

Au pairs get right to a paid holiday

FAMILIES WHO employ au pairs will have to give them up to four weeks' paid leave, rest breaks and access to the conciliation service Acas under a European directive. The revelation that au pairs would be hit by the Working Time Directive emerged yesterday as the Government attempted to deny that the law would give similar rights to paper boys. Downing Street described as "pretty absurd" reports that teenage newspaper deliverers would be covered by the regulations, but the European Commission maintained they would indeed be included. As the Government was accused by the Tories of presiding over an "unholy mess" over the affair, it emerged that au pairs were covered by the "domestic servants" section of the directive. As with all workers affected by the UK's application of the regulations, the home helps will be entitled to four weeks' paid leave a year from November and must have 11 consecutive hours of rest every working day. They are also entitled to a 20-minute break every six hours and can refer any complaints to the conciliation service Acas, a prospect that

was described by Tories as "plain daft". John Redwood, the party's trade and industry spokesman, called on the Government to redraft its regulations to sort out the mess. "Quite a lot of au pairs and their employers would be upset by this interference into their affairs. Why should British families who have come to their own arrangements be told what to do by Brussels? It's crazy." The European Commission flatly contradicted the Government yesterday over the paper boy issue, arguing that the directive did apply to them. Newsagents groups had said the move could lead to 10,000 job losses, but Margaret Beckett, leader of the Commons, told MPs: "It is my understanding that the working time regulations do not apply to paperboys and papergirls." The Prime Minister's official spokesman also described any proposal to give paper boys four weeks' holiday as "absurd". But a senior EU official warned that failure to implement the protection could result in legal action.

IN BRIEF

- Boy, 8, in heroin seizure at jail**
A BOY aged eight was detained by police in Glasgow yesterday and found to be carrying heroin. The boy, who was accompanied by a woman, had been visiting an inmate at Barlinnie Prison. A police spokesman said the pair had not got as far as the visiting hall when they were detained.
- Oilman held hostage in Nigeria**
A BRITISH oil worker is being held hostage in the Niger river delta, officials trying to secure his release said yesterday. They said the man was abducted on Tuesday night by youths in the southern Nigerian town of Warri.
- Rugby star in £130,000 fraud jailed**
THE FORMER Wales and Llanelli rugby forward, Paul Ringer, 50, of Penarth, South Glamorgan, was jailed for a year by Cardiff Crown Court after admitting a £130,000 fraud involving the collapse of his property company.
- Fatal blow to Gladiators on TV**
GLADIATORS HAS been scrapped as a regular series, ITV confirmed last night. The director of programmes, David Liddiment, said: "Every show of this kind has a lifespan, and it's now time for ITV to move on."

DIANE COYLE
The Chancellor insists on finding extra cash for children by taking it from mothers
IN THE FRIDAY REVIEW PAGE 4

HOW BIG WERE YOURS?

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Platinum found on 'forbidden isle' of Hebrides

GEOLOGISTS HAVE found what may be the biggest thing to turn up in the Scottish Isles since the wartime boatload of liquor immortalised as *Whisky Galore!* It's platinum.

Deposits of one of the world's most precious metals have been discovered on Rum in the Inner Hebrides.

With platinum fetching £200 an ounce - considerably more than gold - the finding could have commercial implications elsewhere in northwest Scotland, but panhandlers are advised not to rush for the ferry to Rum.

The size of the deposits detected by geologists from the Camborne School of Mines is small - in fact, invisible to the naked eye - and would not be viable to mine. However, it is an indicator of other possible deposits around the islands of Skye, Mull and far away to the west to Greenland.

Significant quantities of other platinum-related elements, including ruthenium and iridium, with gold, silver, chromium and nickel, were also discovered by the Camborne team, part of the University of Exeter. In a paper published today in the *Journal of the Geological Society*, the team says its observations have "exciting implications" for mineral exploration within the Inner Hebrides.

Dr Duncan Pirrie, who led the research, said Rum was an ideal laboratory. "The impor-

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN
Scotland Correspondent

tance of the find from a mining point of view is that the rocks where the platinum occurs are very well exposed so it is easy to study them."

Until quite recently, Rum was known as the "forbidden isle" - first because of the exclusivity of the Bullough family who ran it as a sporting estate, and then because it was



run under the former Nature Conservancy Council, whose concern was its rare plants, eagles and an indigenous breed of field mouse. Its successor, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), is more welcoming, and the island gets about 10,000 visitors a year.

Though only four miles across, it has mountainous pinnacles reaching more than 2,000 feet. Rum began the 19th century with a population of 400

but most were shipped to Nova Scotia to make way for sheep. Today it is home to 23 people, nearly all linked to SNH, and has just three pupils in its tiny primary school. Over the next 10 years, SNH would like to see the community grow to about 50 but there are few houses or facilities. Platinum or gold prospectors, other than scientists, would not be welcome and, anyway, there is no pub.

Mining companies will study the findings with interest but are not falling over themselves to work in the area. The seams where the platinum was found are less than 1cm thick whereas in rocks where it is commercially mined, mainly in South Africa, the seams are 10cm thick.

Graham Smith, the British Geological Survey's principal minerals geologist in Scotland, said even if richer deposits were found, companies were wary of working in environmentally sensitive areas. "The only commercial interest might be if there were offshore deposits. If there is a chance development might be opposed, they would hesitate to go in."

Scotland's only commercial gold mine, in the central Highlands, is on a "care and maintenance" basis, waiting for an increase in the gold price - currently less than £170 an ounce. There is also considerable interest in gemstone prospects in the northwest, particularly diamonds and sapphires.



The island of Rum's platinum seams are not rich enough to attract a rush of prospectors

Ret

End raids on Iraq, says SAS general

THE FORMER commander of the SAS in the Falklands War, General Sir Michael Rose, attacked Tony Blair and President Bill Clinton yesterday for the continuing air strikes on Iraq.

General Rose, who commanded the peacekeeping forces during the crisis in Bosnia, echoed Tony Benn, the veteran Labour campaigner, by warning the air strikes were creating a "culture of violence" and risked alienating the British public.

"The continual TV images of the West's high-technology systems causing death and destruction to people in the Third World will not be tolerated forever by civilised people," he said in a lecture at the Royal United Services Institute.

He said the efforts to reach a political settlement were "negated by firing cruise missiles in Afghanistan and Iraq". He added: "It is pointless trying to achieve goals through limited war aims, which can only be properly achieved by waging absolute war."

General Rose also warned the Government that it was putting in peril its capability for sustaining operations with the cuts in the Territorial Army from 59,000 to 41,200 reservists. His attack was mounted as the Government came under renewed fire from the Labour-led Commons Select Committee on Defence over the TA cuts.

Bruce George, its chairman, appealed to ministers to rethink the cuts and reverse the closure of some TA centres, including the Duke of York's headquarters in London.

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

On the relations between the regular Army and the reservists, Mr George said: "We have been aware of an undercurrent of distrust and, on occasion disdain, from some sections of the Ministry of Defence and the regular Army when dealing with the TA."

He added: "Our report makes it clear that we are aware of it and that it must stop. We expect future relations between the two parts of the Army to be characterised by mutual respect."

"Ministers must act as the honest brokers," he said. "They should not be afraid to knock heads together if relations start once more to sour."

The committee was furious at the MoD for ridiculing its latest report. It also claimed that a new recruitment drive, launched yesterday by the MoD, was a pre-emptive strike to dampen interest in the committee's findings.

In spite of the overall cuts, the MOD announced it was mounting a £4m campaign to find 10,000 new recruits for the TA. The campaign features a high-tech poster, which changes depending on the angle from which it is viewed.

From one angle the eight-foot wide poster shows a building worker on site, from another he becomes a fully camouflaged soldier carrying a rifle in a battle zone.

The slogan underneath is: "In the TA you need to be ready at any moment".

'Self-combustion' ad upsets viewers

A TELEVISION advertisement showing people apparently bursting into flames, which promotes a new magazine, has provoked a surge of complaints. About 150 viewers, including representatives from the fire service, complained to the Independent Television Commission, saying they found the scenes "distressing" and "totally inappropriate". The ITC is investigating the adverts, which promote the magazine *Heat* and were first shown on network television two weeks ago.

Suzanne France, a spokesperson for the ITC, said: "We had quite a rapid reaction from viewers, with most saying they found it totally inappropriate imagery to sell a commercial product." A spokesman for the Fire Brigades Union said: "It is wholly inappropriate and totally insensitive to use these images in this way."

A spokesman for Emap Metro, the publisher of the magazine, said: "The scenes involve a lot of water or situations which make it obvious that it isn't real. It is not our intention to offend and we don't feel we have."

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End raid
on Iraq,
says SAS
general

Self-combustion
and upsets viewer

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£7,495 on the road

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1.3 SEI engine
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£75 pm 9.1% APR
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**With one years
free insurance**

Monthly payments £74.04
Mileage pa 9,000
Deposit £2,623.25
Balance £4,871.75
Total credit charges £781.21
Total payable £8,276.21
Term 25 months
24 monthly payments of
£74.04
Optional final purchase
payment £3,806.00

Fiesta Zetec
£9,550 on the road

Power steering
Driver's airbag
16v 1.25 engine, 3dr
Central locking
Self correcting rear suspension
Alloy wheels

£108 pm 8.9% APR
on Options

(plus deposit and optional final purchase payment)

**With one years
free insurance**

Monthly payments £107.21
Mileage pa 9,000
Deposit £3,342.50
Balance £6,207.50
Total credit charges £949.54
Total payable £10,499.54
Term 25 months
24 monthly payments of
£107.21
Optional final purchase
payment £4,594.00

Focus Zetec
£13,000 on the road

Power steering
Driver & passenger airbags
16v 1.6 / 16v 1.8 engine, 3dr
Remote central double locking
Independent rear suspension
Alloy wheels

£172 pm 11.9% APR
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With climate pack*

Includes air conditioning, "quick clear"
windscreen and heated washer jets.

Monthly payments £171.25
Mileage pa 12,000
Deposit £4,550.00
Balance £8,450.00
Total credit charges £1,634.00
Total payable £14,634.00
Term 25 months
24 monthly payments of
£171.25
Optional final purchase
payment £5,904.00

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Mondeo Verona
£14,020 on the road

Power steering
Driver's airbag
16v 1.8 engine
Air conditioning
Multi-link suspension
Alloy wheels

£197 pm 8.9% APR
on Options

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Monthly payments £197.00
Mileage pa 12,000
Deposit £4,907.00
Balance £9,113.00
Total credit charges £1,279.00
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Gay parents hold no fear for women of the world

ANGELA MASON, the director of the gay rights group Stonewall, is used to making speeches on controversial issues to a sometimes hostile reception. But she admitted she was very surprised when the Townswomen's Guild invited her to speak about gay parenting.

But then, guild members are a feisty bunch. Not for them the genteel pleasure of making jam and patchwork quilts. They are campaigners, born out of the suffragette movement and, not content with fighting for medical reasons, they are looking for a new cause.

At a conference in London to debate the family yesterday, nearly 300 members, mostly

BY KATE WATSON-SMYTH

over 50, trooped in, adjusted their glasses and sat pens at the ready to learn about the modern family. They made short work of George Howarth, the Home Office minister brought in at the last minute to replace Paul Boateng, who was unavoidably detained.

"Speak up," came an imperious voice from the back. "We really can't hear what you're saying," she said to a chorus of "hear, hear". Mr Howarth ploughed on with his speech about government policy and looked mighty relieved when his turn was over and he could scuttle back to Westminster. They listened and nodded



Townswomen's Guild members listen intently yesterday to a speech by Angela Mason, director of the gay rights group Stonewall

Neville Elder

appreciatively when speakers from the National Stepfamily Association and the National Council for One Parent Families spoke of the importance of understanding the difficulties faced by single parents. What then would they make of Ms Mason, who had a daughter,

now 14, by donor insemination and who has lived with her female partner for 20 years? When she spoke of the hurt that lesbians and gays felt in the face of prejudice, they nodded sympathetically. When she spoke of her daughter's confidence and told them that she was not

teased at school, a few eyebrows were raised but they remained silent.

"In my experience and from research done on this subject, it has been seen that children in lesbian and gay families grow up very similarly to those in heterosexual families and are

no more likely to be homosexual or teased at school than anyone else," said Ms Mason.

As she returned to her seat, there was a round of applause. No doubt some were disapproving, but they kept it to themselves. One asked how the lesbian family worked.

"Who is the mother, and how does a child relate to two mothers?" There was a rustle of tins. But these women were not disapproving of a lesbian family, they were annoyed at the personal nature of the question.

After they adjourned for lunch, Anne Wilkes, the national vice-chairman, spoke to approving nods when she said the guild was a tolerant group who simply wanted to learn. And with that, they filed back into the hall to listen to speeches on a subject most of them were more familiar with - the role of the grandparent.

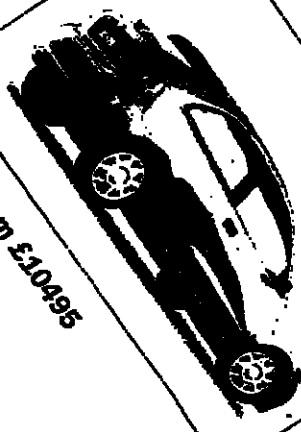
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Sex party men have sentence reduced

FIVE MEN convicted of taking part in gay sex parties at a private home had their sentences reduced by the Court of Appeal yesterday.

The men, part of the Bolton Seven, as they became known, were found guilty last year in a case that became a cause célèbre for civil liberties and gay rights campaigners. All seven had willingly taken part in sexual acts but gay sex is only legal if no more than two persons take part or are present and they are aged 18 or over. In the Bolton case police seized video tapes showing group sex.

Gary Abbie, 22, Jonathan Moore, 21, Mark Love, 21, Derek Godfrey, 26, and another man who was 17 at the time of the offence and cannot be named were all given probation or community service for offences including buggery and gross indecency. Yesterday Mr Justice Maurice Kay, who heard the appeal with Mrs Justice Bracewell, said they had concluded that the imposition of community service orders on the defendants was unfair as none of the five had a previous conviction for a sexual offence.

Probation orders of 12 months were substituted in the case of the 17-year-old as well as Godfrey and Love who had been given combination orders of 13 months' probation and 100 hours of community service. Moore had his two years' probation cut to 12 months and Abbie had 150 hours of community service replaced with a one-year conditional discharge.

However, the Court of Appeal rejected the argument presented on behalf of the five that under the European Convention on Human Rights they

BY KIM SENGUPTA

should receive an absolute or conditional discharge.

Mr Justice Kay stated that it was up to the trial judge to decide to what extent he took the tenets of the Convention into account. Otherwise there was a danger that judicial discretion would be turned into a "judicial straitjacket".

The judge added that although consensual homosexual offences were not viewed with the same seriousness with which they had been once, the trial judge was technically entitled to pass community service sentences.

Mr Justice Kay noted that the video recorded acts between virtual strangers and the offences might be seen as more serious than private interaction between two individuals.

The five men intend to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights and are also seeking advice on whether they can appeal to the House of Lords, their lawyers said last night. Janet Cragg, of Manchester solicitors Robert Lizar, said the basis of the appeal to Europe would be on grounds of infringement of privacy and human rights. Any appeal to the Lords is expected to be on sentencing rather than conviction.

Evan Harris, the Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, who has campaigned for the men welcomed the judgment, but added: "The campaign for the civil rights of these men will not end until Britain's laws no longer discriminate against homosexuals and consenting adults are not criminalised for private consensual behaviour."

Welsh meningitis may be spreading

ALL PUPILS AT a school in South Wales are to be inoculated against meningitis amid new fears that the recent outbreak may be spreading.

Two 17-year-old pupils from the school, Y Pant comprehensive, Pontyclun, were in hospital with the disease last night, one of them critically ill. The school is 10 miles from Pontypridd, which has seen 12 confirmed cases and three deaths. The 12th and most recent victim, a one-year-old girl, who has not been named, is being treated at East Glamorgan Hospital, where she was "poorly but stable" yesterday.

However, doctors said there was no link between the case and the 11 others diagnosed in the Pontypridd area. The baby is from Church Green, four miles from Pontypridd and is

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

suffering from the pneumococcal form of the disease.

Seven pupils from the town have been treated in hospital for the meningococcal strain and six are said to be recovering.

Pupils and teachers at Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School, Pontypridd, held a service yesterday in memory of Lynne James, 55, a home economics teacher who died from meningitis this week.

A French exchange student died yesterday, two weeks after being taken to hospital in Brighton with the disease. Ludovic Blot, a 20-year-old from Grenoble, is believed to have contracted C-strain meningococcal meningitis. More tests are being done.

Dying
naked

fish vic

My Daughter's
Health Editor
About a week
when I
decided to
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book about
her health
and how
she was
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her illness

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Dying smoker wins £30m from maker of Marlboro cigarettes

THE AMERICAN tobacco industry was trembling at the prospect of an avalanche of lawsuits yesterday after a Californian woman with terminal lung cancer won an unprecedented \$50m (£30m) in punitive damages from Philip Morris, maker of the Marlboro brand, that she blames for killing her.

The award, granted by a jury in the San Francisco County Superior Court, was three times higher than the amount being sought by the plaintiff's lawyers and more than 25 times higher than any previous punitive damages inflicted on a tobacco company. With hundreds of similar lawsuits pending around the country and hundreds more expected after Wednesday's decision, the tobacco companies now risk being deluged in expensive and potentially crippling litigation.

"This certainly confirms the industry's worst nightmare," said Robert Rabin, a law professor at Stanford University. Shares in all of America's big tobacco companies took a beating on Wall Street, with Philip Morris dipping in early trading. The company's value has fallen by 30 per cent since last summer.

The California suit was brought by Patricia Henley, a 52-year-old businesswoman from Los Angeles, who smoked for more than 30 years before being diagnosed with lung cancer two years ago. She said she had genuinely believed assurances by tobacco companies that there was no proven link between smoking and lung cancer and realised too late, in 1994, that she had been misled. In addition to the \$50m in punitive

BY ANDREW GUMBEL
in Los Angeles

damages, she was awarded \$15m to compensate her for medical bills and curtailment of life expectancy.

Her lawyer, a well-known anti-tobacco advocate called Madelyn Chabot, presented more than 1,000 company documents seeking to minimise or deny the damage that smoking can cause. These included an infamous "frank statement" posted in newspaper advertisements in 1953 in which the main companies pledged to investigate health concerns surrounding smoking.

"Our decision was based on a lot of evidence, the suppression of known facts by Philip Morris. They had a lot of information they just didn't give out. This jury really as a whole was very angry at the cigarette companies," the jury foreman, George Louis, a non-smoker, said after the award was announced.

Lawyers for Philip Morris said the decision was motivated more by emotion than legal good sense and vowed to appeal. "The punitive damage award of \$50m is so absurd and grossly disproportionate to the compensatory damage award of \$15m as to clearly show passion and prejudice on the part of the jury," said Gregory Little, Philip Morris's associate general counsel.

Legal experts believe Philip Morris may succeed in reducing the damages but is unlikely to have them waived altogether - opening the floodgates for other cancer victims to make similar claims.



Patricia Henley waiting outside the courtroom in San Francisco yesterday as the jury considered her claim against Philip Morris

Ms Henley, whose cancer is in remission after a bout of chemotherapy, was elated by the court decision and said she would donate the money to educational programmes to deter children from smoking. "I don't touch blood money," she said. "It was a great jury and it took a brave jury to make this decision."

With tobacco companies under increasing commercial and legal pressure in the United States, they have sought one-off settlements to ward off precisely this sort of litigation. Last November, they agreed to pay \$200m to 46 of the 50 American states to avoid being sued for the medical costs of treating smokers.

Lawsuits by individuals have been relatively rare. California actually banned such actions for 10 years but repealed the ban in 1997. At the same time, the state also outlawed smoking in all public places including restaurants and bars.

Curb on the car clocking cheats

BY PHILIP THORNTON
Transport Correspondent

THE GOVERNMENT is to keep a database of annual car mileages in an attempt to eliminate the illegal practice of "clocking" in which dubious dealers wind back odometers to increase the sale value.

In a Bill passing through Parliament, garages will be obliged to record a car's mileage when it comes in for an MOT test. This will then be passed on to the DVLA, the Government's driving licence agency, which is being given the power to set up a computerised database.

In a separate move, a voluntary system of recording the mileage when a car is sold would be made mandatory. Potential purchasers would then be able to access a computerised record of the car's mileage, which would highlight any unusual patterns.

The measures pick up recommendations made in an Office of Fair Trading report in October 1997. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions said its plans were contained in the Road Traffic (Vehicle Testing) Bill. The Bill is not part of the Government's legislative programme but a department spokesman said it would be picked up by a backbencher and get ministerial support.

"We are planning to make recorded mileage and MOT tests available to consumers as part of the MOT computerisation project. There are plans to make that information available to consumers," he said.

The issue has created a turf war with the Department of Trade and Industry, which is also pushing the measures as part of its aim to empower consumers against retail abuses.

The DTI says it is keen on the idea and believes a reliable system of recording mileage is an important measure in supporting the used car market. A DTI spokesman said: "We think reliable mileage recording has a significant role to play in increasing consumer confidence."

British victims give US verdict a cautious welcome

BRITISH anti-smoking campaigners were cautious yesterday about the impact of the San Francisco jury's verdict. Success on one side of the Atlantic does not automatically lead to success on the other.

British lung cancer victims seeking compensation from UK tobacco companies suffered a serious setback this week when a high court judge decided not to exercise his power to allow eight test cases, lodged outside the legal time limit, to proceed against Galaher and Imperial Tobacco.

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

The sufferers had asked Mr Justice Wright to use his discretion under the 1980 Limitations Act to waive a rule stating that such claims must proceed within three years of diagnosis of the disease.

The decision means that 36 of the original 52 plaintiffs are now barred from proceeding.

The remaining 16 are considering whether to fight on. Clive Bates, director of Ash, the anti-smoking pressure group, said: "If this US decision had come a month ago I would have said brilliant. Now I am not so sure. The judge in the UK case has, in refusing to exercise his discretion, displayed his ill

will and displeasure towards the plaintiffs. Some of the 16 who could still proceed are quite frail and the prospect of being grilled by the tobacco companies' lawyers is quite unpleasant.

"They are determined to pursue their claims but they have to decide whether it is worth proceeding. The court has put a big hurdle in front of the case."

Gordon McVie, director-general of the Cancer Research Campaign, said: "This is another nail in the coffin for the tobacco industry. But the danger is, the more we wound them in this country and the US, the more likely they are to target their activities in the Third World. I hope it will give lawyers for cancer patients in this country ammunition to appeal against the judge's decision here."

A spokesman for Imperial Tobacco in the UK said: "The legal situation in the US is completely different and this has absolutely no relevance to the situation here."

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Lewinsky and Hyde score in impeachment Oscars

As the US Senate winds up the impeachment trial of Bill Clinton, and with it almost six months of Congressional drama, it is time to recognise some of those whose performances have delighted and embarrassed us by turns. For services to politics, to America, to entertainment and – of course – to themselves, they have no peers. 'We return you,' said CNN after a spell from the Senate, 'to our regular programme, *Showbiz Today*.' Oh no you don't, viewers said, we have been there all along.

By Mary Dejevsky

BEST MALE LEAD

Dale Bumpers



The recently retired senator, from the President's home-state of Arkansas, 73 and pleasantly greying, who drew on all of his rhetorical and dramatic skills to plead for his ally's acquittal. He struck just the right senatorial register, between his down-home recollections of Bill, his deep respect for his former colleagues, the anguish he felt for Bill's wife and family and his lawyer's love of the Constitution. It was the performance of his life and enhanced his own reputation and the Senate's. Too bad it was his farewell.

BEST LAWYER IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

Cheryl Mills



A deputy White House counsel, 33, who was totally unfazed by being the only black woman in the Chamber. She was half the age of almost everyone except Monica, but rose to her role with the smooth passion of a seasoned pro. 'A star is born,' said the reviewers, and they were right. Ms Mills may have been on shaky factual ground at times, but she never showed it. Her ringing refrain, 'It's those facts, those stubborn facts again', delivered in her soft, Southern drawl, will long be remembered.

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN UNKNOWN (MALE)

Lindsey Graham



The 43-year-old Republican representative for South Carolina wins outright. His smooth performances in the House judiciary committee and impeachment debate marked him out as a new force. A former small-town lawyer, Mr Graham was that rare Republican prosecutor who understood bombast could be self-defeating. He also had some of the best lines. 'Where I come from,' he told the Senate of the President's nocturnal calls to Ms Lewinsky, 'a person who calls someone up at 2.30 in the morning is up to no good.'



BEST FEMALE LEAD

Monica Lewinsky

The 25-year-old Valley Girl turned presidential consort, the only Monica who no longer needs a surname. Her celluloid presence in the Senate convinced even the most hardened Republican of Bill Clinton's unerring eye for the fair sex. 'Bright', 'impressive', 'intelligent'... (what they meant, of course, was 'sexy'). She knew instinctively when to charm, when to act the air-head and when to deploy the techniques of legal hair-splitting she has recently mastered. She is the unchallenged mistress of the big occasion, if no longer of the President. But maybe she could have another think about the hair-do.

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN UNKNOWN (FEMALE)

Susan Collins

Republican Senator from Maine, 46, in a close contest with her fellow Mainiac, Olympia Snowe, and Texan, Kay Bailey Hutchison. But Ms Collins wins because of the depth of the obscurity from which she emerged. Smart and above all, sensible – so sensible – Ms Collins dreamt up an idea that put her, and her state, on the impeachment map. She devised the ingenious 'findings of fact' that would allow senators to put Clinton's offences on record, then vote for his acquittal. The idea was quashed – but she did present it very well.



BEST PLAYER IN MORE THAN ONE ROLE

Henry Hyde and Robert Byrd

A tie between the Republican chairman of the House judiciary committee, Hyde, 74, from Illinois (right), and Byrd, 81, a Democrat senator from West Virginia. Hyde was exposed as an adulterer, but went on to spirited performances, wrapping together biblical texts, the Gettysburg address and a letter from a penitent schoolboy. Byrd carried off the epic feat of sponsoring a motion to dismiss the charges against Clinton as unsubstantiated, and a week later stating with equal assurance that he was convinced of his guilt.



BEST PERFORMANCE IN A CAMEO ROLE

William Rehnquist

With a proper sense of occasion, Mr Rehnquist, 74, the Chief Justice of the US, had copied the gold stripes on his black gown from a performance of *Iolanthe*, but remained himself throughout. More moderator than judge, as the impeachment trial required, Mr Rehnquist none the less handed down two landmark decisions. He enhanced the atmosphere of his court by allowing the senators to call themselves 'senators' rather than 'jurors', and he memorably ruled against the Majority leader's call for a coffee break.



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confesses

By FARMER

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Starr to face a formal inquiry

AS BILL CLINTON'S trial finally draws to an end, the next person to find himself under fire in Washington could be Kenneth Starr, the man who led the initial investigation.

The US Justice Department has informed him and his colleagues that they will be the targets of a formal inquiry into their behaviour. The possible charges include allegations that they broke legal rules and lied in their zeal to prosecute the President.

Behind the charges is a belief among Mr Clinton's allies that Mr Starr and his team were part of a group of right-wing lawyers who had decided to nail the President come what may. Mr Starr was chosen as independent counsel after a lunch between a senior US judge and two right-wing Republican senators. But there is also wider concern that the very idea of an independent counsel is deeply flawed, and President Clinton's impeachment may be the last time that it is used in its present form.

Mr Starr, a former official in Ronald Reagan's administration, was appointed to investigate Whitewater, an alleged financial fraud in Mr Clinton's home state, Arkansas.

That led him to look into the President's private life and the sexual harassment suit brought by a former Arkansas state employee, Paula Jones. But the Justice Department wants to find out exactly how close he and his staff came to the lawyers representing Ms Jones. The prosecutors said they had no contacts, but there is evidence that they did.

The Jones case then led Mr Starr to look at other cases of Mr Clinton's sexual behaviour, including his relationship with the former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. The Justice Department is also interested in an offer of immunity allegedly made to Ms Lewinsky on condition that she did not contact her lawyer, which is in breach of US legal rules.

The US Attorney General, Janet Reno, told Mr Starr a month ago that he would be investigated, although the charges

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

go back a year. If he is found to have breached the rules, he would be removed from office.

Mr Starr's defenders, who see him as the doughty guardian of the Constitution, regard Ms Reno's decision as a partisan attempt to undermine the case against the President. Mr Starr's office is also reportedly ready to counter-attack, and is said to be considering whether it can indict Mr Clinton – press criminal charges against him – while he is in office. The long saga of the past year has been about impeaching him and removing him from office, but Mr



Kenneth Starr: May be the last independent counsel

Starr's staff are said to have concluded, based on 'logic and legal precedent', that they can also take the President to court for perjury and obstruction of justice.

When reports surfaced two weeks ago that they were considering this, it caused a fresh outcry. Democrats and the President's lawyers said it was another leak from Mr Starr's office; but the prosecutor and his staff denied they were the source of the report.

This endless toing and froing over Mr Starr is partly a product of politics and partly of legal strategy, but it also reflects a near-universal realisation here that the law establishing independent counsels is deeply flawed.

Mr Starr is likely to be the last appointed on this basis.

MARK STEEL

At Selhurst Park, thousands of people with nothing in common share the afternoon's emotions

IN THE FRIDAY REVIEW PAGE 8

By FARMER

London

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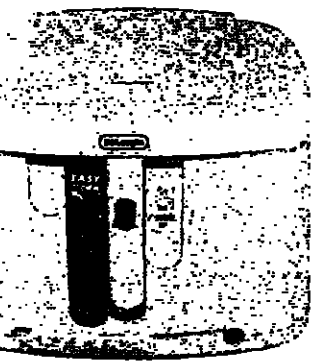
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British troops on Kosovo standby

BRITISH TROOPS were put on alert last night for deployment as part of a peacekeeping force in Kosovo, in spite of the failure to reach an agreement between the warring Serbs and ethnic Albanians.

Heavy equipment was being prepared for shipment to the area, in anticipation of a ceasefire agreement being reached between the Serbs and Kosovo's Albanians, despite virtual deadlock in the peace talks underway in Rambouillet, France.

The Secretary of State for Defence, George Robertson, said he was deploying Challenger tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery and a small number of personnel.

The announcement was "prudent military contingency planning and in no way does it prejudice any decision to proceed", with the deployment of ground troops, he added.

BY COLIN BROWN
AND RUPERT CORNWELL

The decision, which was given a cautious welcome in the House of Commons, involves up to 8,000 British troops and cuts the current period of alert from 72 hours. It came as the former head of the peacekeeping forces in Bosnia, General Sir Michael Rose, warned against sending land forces to Kosovo.

Sir Michael said it would be better if necessary to carry out a "train and equip" programme for the Kosovo Liberation Army so it would be better prepared for fighting Serbian forces. "I believe we may be setting a dangerous precedent in acting in the way we have done over Kosovo which, under international law, is still part of Serbia," he told the Royal United Services Institute in London. Sir Michael added: "We cannot act

as the world's policeman for ever."

Despite little sign of any progress so far, the talks are likely to run into a second week, as the major powers turn the screws on the recalcitrant Serbs and Albanians to reach an interim settlement to end their differences.

The prediction was made by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, after his second visit to Rambouillet in three days, during which he urged both sides to get down to the detailed negotiations which, according to diplomats, have yet to begin.

Mr Cook and the French Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, the other co-chairman of the conference, yesterday also met the President of Serbia, Milan Milutinovic. Last night Belgrade announced that it had signed up to the basic principles of the deal worked out by

the six-nation Contact Group, including a ceasefire and wide autonomy for the province.

But there seems to be deadlock on Belgrade's demands that Kosovo's Albanians should do the same - and renounce the possibility of full independence.

The bodies of 40 ethnic Albanians murdered in Racak on 15 January were finally buried yesterday. Thousands gathered on a cold, muddy hillside above the empty village where the coffins, wrapped in the Albanian flag, were laid to rest as imams said prayers for the dead. "An evil visited Racak," the crowd was told by William Walker, the leader of the monitor force in Kosovo, who was among the first to accuse the Serb security forces of carrying out a massacre. The ensuing outrage galvanised the major powers into organising the Rambouillet conference.



Mourners carrying flag-draped coffins yesterday during the funeral of 40 civilians in Racak, Kosovo. Reuters

Holy City's 'serial killer' confesses

SHE LAY in the middle of the narrow street sixty yards downhill from *The Independent* office, dressed in a brown skirt and a dark jacket. A small black handbag with a gold chain was lying on the ground beside her body. Some time after 10am yesterday somebody had stabbed her several times through the chest and a long stream of dark blood had run down the hill.

Her name was Meila Ka'arin. She was 47, a Palestinian, and at first she seemed to be the third victim within a year by a serial killer who knives Palestinians as they walk through Jewish west Jerusalem. But, in fact, she appears to have died at the hands of another Palestinian. Last night a 23-year-old Palestinian confessed that he had killed her, apparently thinking she was Jewish, as she walked down Elisha Street in the Musrara district.



Meila Ka'arin: Stabbed in Jewish area of Jerusalem

Meila Ka'arin was stabbed in the Musrara district on the dividing line between the Jewish and Palestinian parts of Jerusalem.

Ms Ka'arin was unlucky. If the confession of her killer is true he thought that anybody walking in Elisha Street was inevitably Jewish. It is true that Musrara, Jewish since 1948, is mainly inhabited by the original Sephardic Jewish immigrants and more recently arrived businessmen. But in recent years it has often been used by Palestinians as the quickest way by foot from their part of the city to the newly-built municipality building where they pay water rates.

The first person to see Ms Ka'arin's body did not realise she was dead. Thinking she was sick he leaned over her and

BY PATRICK COCKBURN
in Jerusalem

asked: "Are you all right? Can I help you?" Then he saw blood welling out of her chest and called the police.

By one account she had parked a car, walked up the street to the municipality building and returned half-an-hour later. She may have been attacked close to the steel gate of 11 Elisha Street. There are two pools of blood in front of the door. She must then have staggered a few feet into the centre of the road before she died.

Neighbours and passers-by immediately gathered as police dusted the gate where Ms Ka'arin was stabbed for fingerprints. "Is it a terrorist attack?" asked Nurit Harvey, and added in a worried voice: "It could have been me." She had left her car to attend a trial in a nearby court and when she came back the police stopped her moving it because it was parked close to the murdered woman.

Barry Satlow, a lawyer from Colorado, was in Jerusalem to attend his nephew's bar mitzvah but his brother lived in 11 Elisha Street. Finally he persuaded the police to let him through.

The police suggested early on the radio that Ms Ka'arin might have been stabbed in an "honour killing", in other words she might have been stabbed because of some perceived moral transgression, usually sexual, by a relative. "The police always say that," said one neighbour sceptically. "They don't want to say that a Jew killed a Palestinian or it is the serial killer because it stirs up hatred."

People in Jerusalem believe that they can tell Palestinians and Israelis from their dress. Ms Ka'arin with her neat jacket, skirt and handbag must have looked to the young Palestinian like a typical Israeli. In Jerusalem this is enough to get somebody killed.

For two hours Ms Ka'arin's body, yellow plastic covering her face, lay in the street. Then two men strapped her to a stretcher and took her away. A water truck hosed away the blood and Elisha Street returned to normal.

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Ayatollah still casts a sinister shadow over Iranian hopes for a new dawn

By ROBERT FISK
Middle East Correspondent

NOT LONG after he returned to Iran, I had my only chance to talk to Ayatollah Khomeini.

We had been shown his thin blankets on the humble concrete floor of his home in Qom, told of the yoghurt that he ate for breakfast and then shown into a tiny room crowded with Revolutionary Guards and Islamic clerics. The Ayatollah lectured us on the evils of America, the necessity of deporting the Shah back to Iran for trial and the eternal nature of the Islamic Republic.

A small crack in the sun-drenched window had cast a pool of light on the floor; at this emanation, the Ayatollah stared throughout our conversation. It was as if he was transfixed by this light; he never took his eyes off it.

It was half an hour before we grasped the fact that he would not look at us. He spoke in a slow, rasping but quiet voice, his words translated by Sadeq Qotbzadeh, his ally in Parisian exile whom he equally ignored. A few years later, he would acquiesce in Qotbzadeh's execution for plotting against the Islamic Republic. Here, indeed, was a revolution that could consume its children.

Would the revolution, whose 20th anniversary Iranians celebrated yesterday, have been any different - any more generous - if Saddam Hussein (our friend at the time) had not invaded Iran in 1980 in the hope of destroying the new regime?

Already, the revolution's enemies in Tehran were being strung up or put before firing squads. I returned to Qom a few weeks later to report on the trial of a staff sergeant in the Shah's army, accused of firing at demonstrators in the last days of the Shah. The crowd in the courtroom demanded his death and I tried desperately to explain to the American-educated brother of the doomed man that the presence of a Western reporter would not spare him. I told the judge, privately, that I regarded mercy as the greatest of virtues. I was wasting my time.



An Iranian holds a portrait of the late Ayatollah Khomeini during a rally in Tehran yesterday to mark the 20th anniversary of the Islamic revolution. *Damir Sagolj*

There were no velvet gloves in the Iranian revolution. And after Saddam sent his legions across the frontier, I found myself in a troop train travelling north from the battlefields of Ahwaz, its dying passengers coughing the mustard gas out of their lungs into white bandages. At the battle of the Fish Lake, young men took off their helmets to show their fearlessness amid the shellfire, the corpses of their Iraqi enemies piled around them, the shells hissing into the Somme-like

land. I spent an afternoon in a dug-out with Iran's young boy soldiers, some of them only nine, village boys with miniature swords of paradise hanging around their necks to ensure their place in the next world. When they rode their mopeds through the Iraqi minefields, they wore greatcoats in the heat - so that every part of their shattered bodies could be returned for burial. Saddam was our man then. And when they've called for our support in bombing Iraq, not

once have our Western leaders mentioned those tens of thousands of Iranian victims of Saddam's butchery. That would be asking too much; besides, without the Iraqi invasion, the ferocious anger of the Iranian revolution may have cooled earlier. In the event, Khomeini - these are his words - "ate poison" when faced with the collapse of his western front in 1988. In revenge, the regime turned on its imprisoned opponents. Young Iranian men

and women, interrogated and lashed, many of them having already served their time in jail, were herded into courtyards for mass executions, hanged like thrushes on groaning scaffolds. Perhaps 8,000 died, some say many more. In the new Iranian era, it is sometimes difficult - in the streets of Tehran or talking to the liberal, intelligent, bright young men now running part of the government - to imagine what cruelty was acted out in the Islamic Republic's name.

And with a president as admired as Mohamed Khatami - democratically elected and more popular among his people than Israel's elected leaders - it seems almost churlish to remember the brutality of what went before. But Iran's intransigent clerics are still there, as loyal to their dead Imam as the boys who drove to their death through the minefields. The Islamic Republic still has a Khomeini-inspired Supreme Leader - Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei - and it still has its enemies. Khatami's brave attempt to open a dialogue with the United States was rebuffed by an administration whose Middle East policies are virtually identical with Israel's. Only this week, Martin Indyk, the former head of the most powerful Israeli lobby group in America and now US Under-Secretary of State, was asking for Arab support for the old, discredited policy of dual - ie. Iraqi and Iranian - "containment". Has

the memory of the 1979 siege of the US embassy and the long months of imprisonment for its diplomats infected the Americans as deeply as the cruelty of the Shah infected the compassion of the Iranians?

Alas, the brutality still exists. Even as Tehran was preparing its jazz bands and religious ceremonies to commemorate the revolution, an old Iranian woman was sentenced to amputation and then hanging for the murder of two young women. Only weeks after President Khatami was elected, a convicted Afghan rapist - his crimes were, of course, truly terrible - was publicly hanged from a crane, his corpse suspended 300ft above a crowd.

This is not the future of Iran, merely a reminder of the harshness of its revolution. Khatami, if he is not betrayed by his internal opponents - or destroyed by the Americans who claimed they wanted to be his friends - may yet turn Iran into one of the great peacemakers of the Middle East.

A laughable idea? What about the new missiles Iran is constructing? Or the reports of chemical warfare preparations? Or the old torturers still at large?

Well, how many other Middle East countries - Israel as well as the Arab nations - can claim to have no long-range missiles, no chemical warfare capability, no cruel old men in retirement?

The tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini is now a Shia shrine of epic proportions, lit up so brightly that airline pilots can see its golden lights from 50 miles away. Was it not he who said that wherever oppression existed in the world, Iran would be fighting against it? Was it not he who said that "we are men of war and we shall export our revolution to the entire world - until the cry of 'Allahu Akbar' reigns over the world, the struggle shall continue?"

Ten years after the old man's death, the West might pause to ask itself if there is still oppression and betrayal in the Middle East and to reflect upon the revolutionary forces that could still be stirred by its barbarity.

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Khatami calls for 'the rule of law'

PRESIDENT Mohamed Khatami of Iran - whose election proved his country's ability to choose a leader democratically - used the anniversary of the Islamic revolution yesterday to demand "the rule of law". His determination to establish a "civil society" in Iran - a land respecting human rights

and free of arbitrary arrest - was linked to the institution that Ayatollah Khomeini introduced after the fall of the Shah. "Defending the revolution is defending the constitution," he said. "The stability of the revolution is only possible with the

rule of law." Civil rights must be respected and the best way to reach this goal was to participate in the local elections, to be held on 26 February. It was left to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, to attack the United States. The revolution, he claimed, "marched on despite

"hostile acts" from America. Khatami's call for a dialogue has received a paltry response from Washington, which still wishes to "contain" Iran and Iraq on an equal footing. The lack of enthusiasm has damaged the president's appeal and helped Khamenei's anti-American rhetoric.

Russian leaders accused of scam

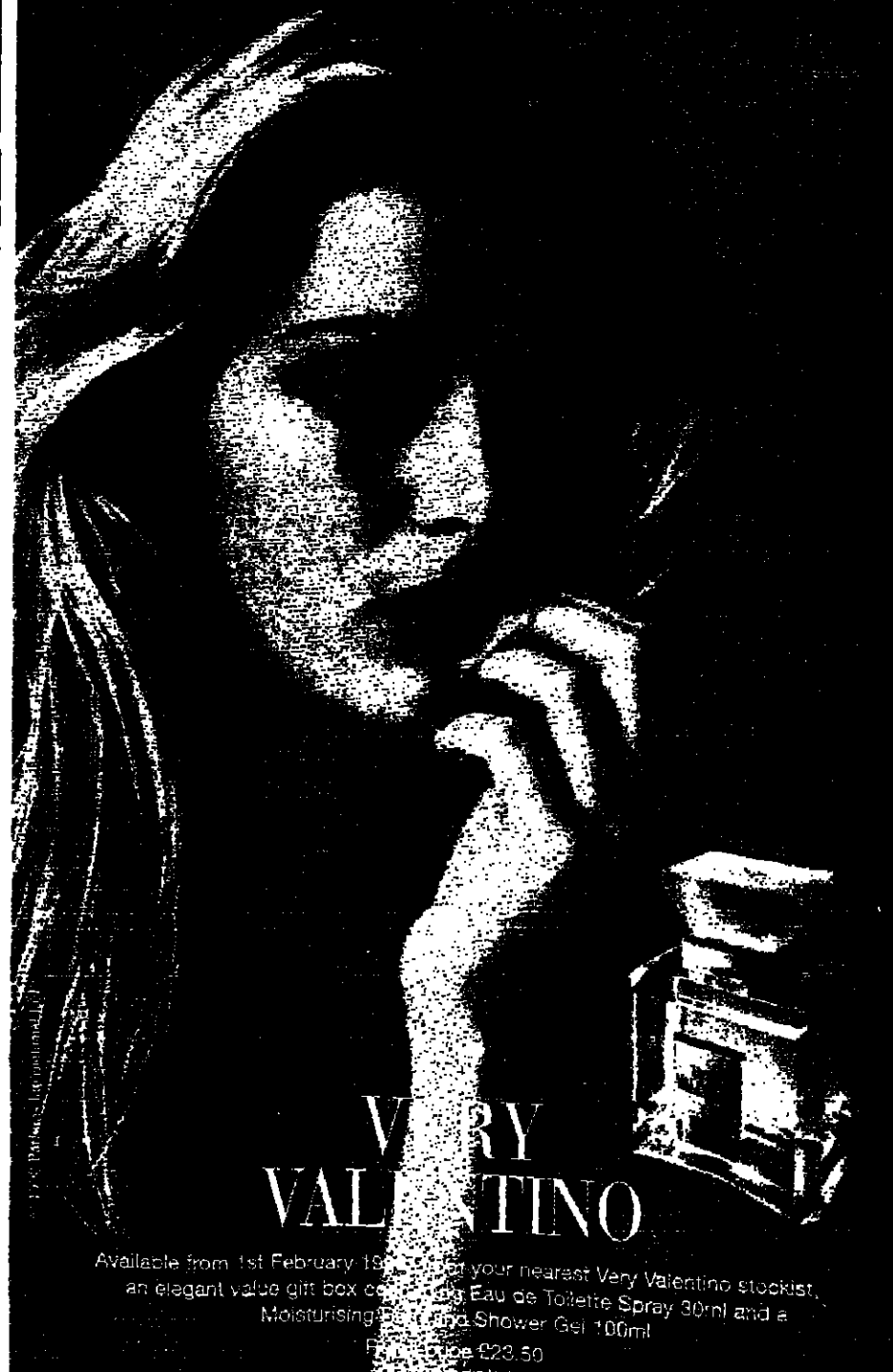
By PHIL REEVES
in Moscow

SLOWLY, QUIETLY, an extraordinary saga is unfolding in Moscow with the potential to be an international embarrassment to Russia and one of the biggest financial scandals of the post-Soviet era.

At its heart, two questions: why did the government set up a shell company in Jersey through which it channelled hard currency reserves, apparently for five years? What happened to the profits? An explanation came this week from Boris Fyodorov, who was finance minister when the firm was set up. It was, he says, a money-making scam for the government's cronies and corrupt officials in the Russian Central Bank. "They were simply allowing friends to earn handsome profits."

If he is right, this happened during a period when Russia received multi-billion-dollar support from the International Monetary Fund, while failing to pay wages and pensions to many millions of Russians. Mr Fyodorov - an economist widely respected in the West - said in 1993 he demanded information about the use of the firm, called Fimaco, but was told by top government officials it was none of his business.

The media has been strangely muted over the affair. Whether the parliament can glean more details is uncertain.



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Eleventh victim is found in snow

AN ELEVENTH victim of the deadly avalanche that hit Chamonix in France on Tuesday was uncovered by rescue workers yesterday.

The body of a young woman in her twenties was found under 10 feet of densely packed snow, 50 yards from the chalet where she had been staying. Searches are continuing for the body of a twelfth presumed victim, the woman's companion.

The area's under-prefect, Georges Ambroise, said the possibility remained that other victims would be found but no other local people or tourists had been declared missing.

The chief public prosecutor for the region yesterday visited the site of the avalanche - in the Mont Blanc massif, 10 miles east of Chamonix - to decide whether a criminal investigation is justified. The 16 chalets crushed by the avalanche,

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Argentiére

yards uphill to swallow chalets on the opposite slope.

Experts continued to blame the appalling weather - from Sunday to Wednesday, the Chamonix area had four days of storms, which deposited 10 feet of soft, powdery snow on the mountain tops.

The experts said the avalanche was almost certainly of an "aerosol" type - so called because it starts as a cloud of loosely packed snow in the high slopes, and then sucks up harder-packed snow and ice as it heads downhill, at speeds up to 100mph.

The effect is like a combination of an avalanche and a whirlwind. Such phenomena are common high in the mountains but seldom reach the inhabited valley floors.

A dozen smaller avalanches were reported in the area on Wednesday night, one briefly blocking the main road west of Chamonix and another that was checked by avalanche defences just short of the village of Les Bossons. More than 200 people have been evacuated from areas considered at risk.

Those killed in Tuesday's avalanche included Daniel Lagarde, a safety expert at the Grands-Montets ski slope, his wife and four-year-old granddaughter. The Lagarde's 12-year-old son, Raphael, is recovering from hypothermia after being found trapped between packed snow and a shattered wall 10 hours after the family's chalet was flattened.

"We had already found two other bodies and suddenly a wall collapsed," said Raymond Ducroz, part of the rescue team. "Behind, in the beam of a searchlight, we saw a child's head. He groaned and we knew that he was alive."

All five members of a family from the Jura region of France, father, mother and three children aged 11 to 13, also died.

One hostel manager in Argentiére said yesterday that there had been a mass exodus of skiers and tourists from the valley in the past two days.

"There is a panic," he said. "Normally the village would be packed with people at this time of year."



A helicopter brings food to the stricken valley

many of them recently built, were in a "white" no-risk zone, formally approved by local and regional authorities 18 years ago. The prosecutor must decide whether there was negligence in mapping the zones, possibly under commercial pressure to find new sites for building holiday homes and hotels in the narrow Chamonix valley, one of the most popular skiing destinations in France.

Local officials and guides said all local experience pointed to the safety of the village of Montroc, which claimed to have more snow than any other French ski-resort.

The avalanche crashed through the village, ripped a 200-yard wide swath through fir trees, crossed a river and a road and continued for 50 to 100



A goat waits for the farmhands to return from another feast at the village 'restaurant' in northern Normandy

Brian Harris

The village that lives for lunch

EUROPEAN TIMES
RURAL FRANCE

YOU CAN tell this is an authentic rural because it has white plastic tables outside and plastic flowers inside.

A more self-consciously authentic (ie phoney) country restaurant would insist on having a name. This restaurant has none. It simply has a sign which reads "Bar".

There is no menu. If you arrive for lunch (evening meals by prior arrangement only) you eat what Madame is making that day, and you eat, and you eat, and you eat.

In this part of Normandy, in the hills behind Caen, there are few villages that have any kind of surviving business at all. The large village to the south of our house used to have a restaurant, a bar, a shop, a small creamery and a carpenter. In the past 15 years, all have disappeared, save the carpenter.

In the beautifully kept village to the north there used to be two bars, a shop and a post office. None survives. Each has gone the way of the 50,000 rural businesses that have closed in France in the past ten years, victims of malls, hyper-

markets and rural depopulation. The scruffier village down the hill to the east - the principal village of the commune - is luckier. There is a restaurant, a bar, an open-air saw-works, a firewood supplier, a small transport business and a riding school. All survive, even thrive. All, except the riding school, belong to one family.

The patriarch of this business empire, Paul, is a tiny, cross-eyed, hunched man in his 70s, who mainly acts as forester and manager of the saw-works.

Wood is always a hazardous occupation but it is more than usually hazardous in these parts. The hills south of Caen saw some of the worst fighting of the Battle of Normandy in June to August 1944. Half a century later, the older trees - those of loggable age - are still peppered with fragments of shrapnel from shells and bombs. Tree-felling, even logging, must be performed with

a metal detector first and a chain-saw second.

The grandson, Philippe, a sweet man in his 30s with an Elvis haircut and a shy smile, is intermittently in charge of the firewood and transport business (a fleet of two white vans). He is subject to lengthy, unaccountable absences, which leave his aged pépé (grandad) to deliver the wood.

The daughter/mother, Paullette, a broad, 50-something woman in glasses and a lurid, floral dress is the manager and chef of the restaurant with no name. Accredited local people eat in the kitchen at a long table covered with a plastic tartan cloth. If you are a tourist or a stranger, even if you think that you are local because you own a weekend home, you are ushered into the best room. There is no appeal against this judgement.

Inside the best room are the plastic flowers, one of the finest collections outside state own-

ership. In the company of the flowers, you are in for a treat, and a culinary obstacle course.

There are no orders taken, except for drinks. Food arrives and arrives and continues to arrive until you ask for mercy.

This arrangement - table d'hôte in French or pot luck in English - used to be common in rural France. It is less common now. By my observation, four or five local people, farmers and labourers, plus Philippe and the grandad and a number of cousins, eat their lunch in madame's restaurant each weekday. There never seems to be any shortage of food for the chance passer-by.

Typically, Madame might serve you a starter of cold ham wrapped around mixed vegetables; followed by another starter, a green salad or a tabouleh (couscous salad), followed by a huge tureen of white fish, cooked with eggs, milk and vegetables. The unwise might assume that was

the main course and take second helpings. It is followed by an equally large tureen containing, possibly, a lamb stew, with vegetables on the side.

The first time we ate here we did not make it beyond tasting the fish course (to madame's intense disapproval). The second time I did reach the stew but my stomach refused at the next fence (a selection of Norman cheeses). Two frail, old ladies at the next table gobbled all that was set before them. It turned out that there was also a rich and sticky dessert.

For all this food, Madame charges Fr50 (a little over £5) a head (wine not included) on weekdays, and Fr70 on Saturdays and Sundays. She is unlikely ever to be in the Michelin Guide but her food is always tasty in a robust kind of way.

The economics of the enterprise are impossible to fathom. Maybe the wood props up the restaurant. But this is not self-evident. Paul and Philippe seem to spend most of their time sitting in Paullette's kitchen. Eating.

JOHN LICHFIELD

Poster war in 'Little Saigon'

BY ANDREW GUMBEL
in Los Angeles

TRUONG VAN TRAN only wanted to display a poster of Ho Chi Minh in his southern California video store to make a point, to "open dialogue" about his country nearly 25 years after the end of the Vietnam War.

Despite being vindicated in court, though, he must wonder if the point was worth making.

On Wednesday, an Orange County judge ruled that Mr Tran's poster was protected by his First Amendment right to free expression. That was the good news.

The bad news was that the verdict triggered a mini-riot, landing Mr Tran in hospital after he was punched in the face.

Not only that, he faces an eviction order from his store in Westminster, southern California's very own Little Saigon, and every prospect of a mass boycott by anti-Communist Vietnamese Americans who feel about Ho Chi Minh much the same way Cambodian refugees might feel about Pol Pot.

When Mr Tran first put up the poster last month, hundreds of protesters picketed his store and at one stage he was punched in the head.

A court injunction temporarily ordered him to remove the poster in the interests of keeping the peace, but that order lapsed with Wednesday's ruling.

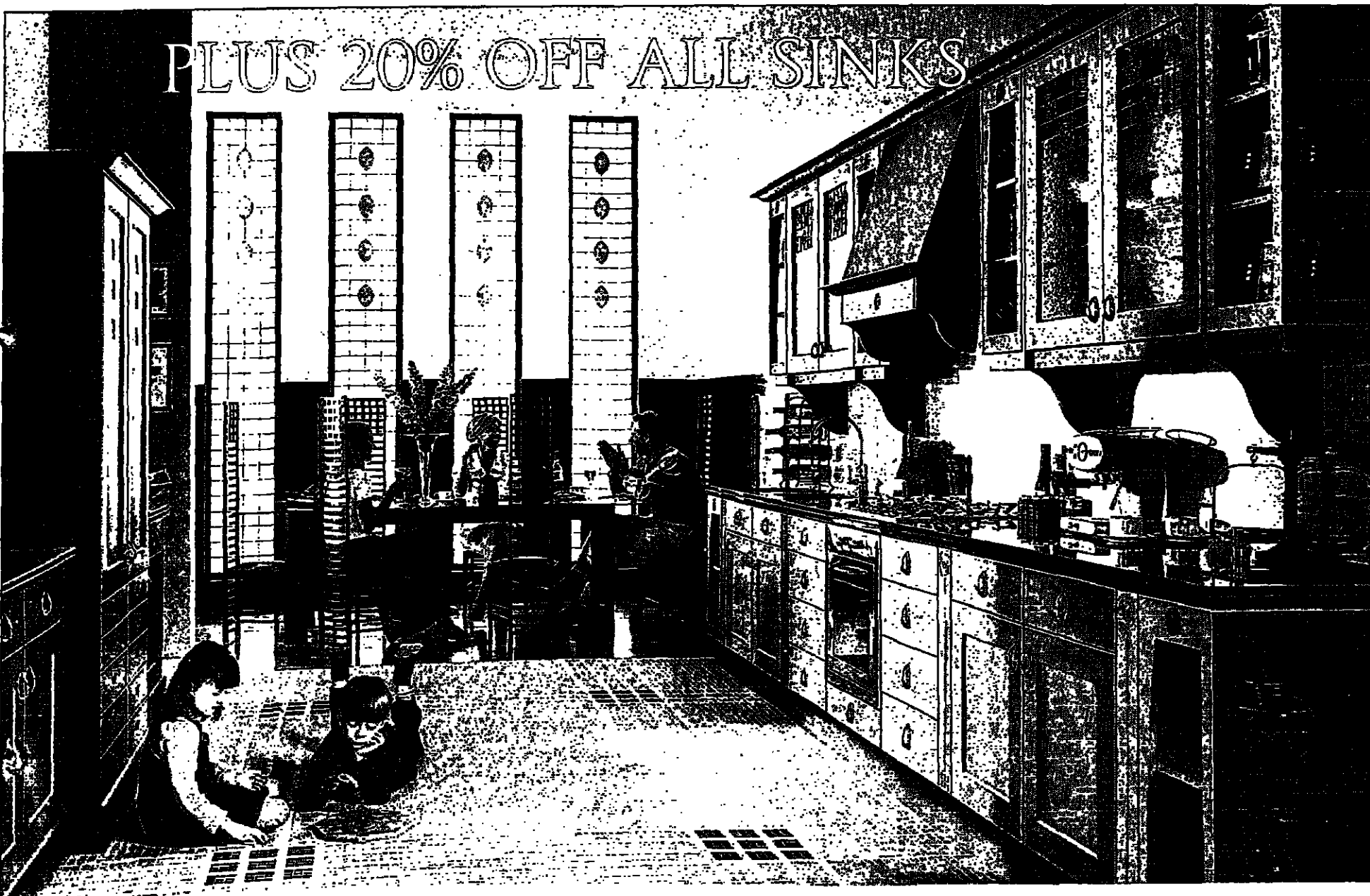
As he returned to his store to put the poster back up, an angry crowd confronted Mr Tran and knocked him to the ground. "Let him die! Let the Communist die!" the protesters chanted as paramedics arrived to take him to hospital.

The blow to his face did not look serious, a police witness said, but Mr Tran has undergone two heart bypass operations and was said to be suffering from chest pains.

Just about everybody seemed angry with him: the police caught in the middle, for failing to contact them for protection; his landlord, for endangering his property; and even the judge, who ruled in his favour with the most reluctant of concluding statements.

"Mr Tran's display is undisputedly offensive and engenders hatred," Judge Barbara Tam Nomoto Schumann said, even as she upheld his constitutional rights.

In court, Mr Tran said he was not a Communist and merely wanted to open debate. "Nothing is more precious than liberty," read a sign he carried to court.



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Over here, overpaid and finishing off

PRESS GANGED late last year into a stand in role as chief executive of Barclays, Sir Peter Middleton was like a dog with two tails yesterday as he paraded his new catch before the national press. On the face of it, Michael O'Neill is everything Sir Peter could have hoped for.

He's an outsider, he's an American, and he doesn't even need a work permit - his mother is Belgian, entitling him to work in the European Union without having to demonstrate that no other European is up to the job.

But perhaps most important of all after the board's experience with the cad Martin Taylor, he's a banker by training and choice. There's always some fly in the ointment, however, and in Mr O'Neill's case it is the American-style remuneration package that comes with the territory.

By US standards, this is by no means excessive, and even judged against his UK peers he will be only fifth in line on base salary after Greg Rutchings, Gerry Robinson, Sir Richard Sykes and Sir Clive Thompson. But base salary is just where it starts. Once the guaranteed bonus, ex-pat allowance and pension contribution is taken into account, his first-year salary rises to £2.3m.



OUTLOOK

On top of that, he gets £5m worth of free shares over three years by "risking" an equal quantity of his own money in the stock. To be out of money on this element of the package, then, Barclays shares would have to nearly halve over the next three years. Even if you think western stock markets are a financial bubble waiting to burst, a sustained fall of that order seems somewhat improbable.

Much more likely is that the former US marine will end up doing a Victor Rice with one of his old buddies from the US banking industry, engineer a trans-Atlantic merger, and the whole Barclays "problem" will vanish into a global mega bank. Mr

O'Neill was already talking mergers yesterday as a route to shareholder value, and he should know. He played a key role in two such exercises - BankAmerica's merger last year with Nationsbank and before that its merger with Continental Group.

But perhaps this is too cynical a view. Mr O'Neill's appointment certainly seemed to go down well in the City, which has no difficulty with a year salary package, and in a good market, the shares edged up nicely yesterday. Unlike his predecessor, Mr O'Neill is at one with the rest of the Barclays board in believing that a bank should be a combination of wholesale and retail.

Indeed, Mr O'Neill's expertise is in wholesale banking and financial markets, and not so much in retail, so presumably Barclays Capital can now breathe a sigh of relief. It has a future, and probably quite a good one, under Mr O'Neill.

However, Mr O'Neill's tenure shapes up, one thing is certain. His appointment, much more so than Martin Taylor's, marks a final break with the traditions of the past. A number of descendants from the original banking families still stalk the corridors, both at head office and in the regions, but with the departure of An-

drew Buxton as chairman later this year, they will no longer be represented on the board. Mr O'Neill brings a wind of change that Mr Taylor, for all his efforts, failed to generate at the pitch necessary to blow away all the old cobwebs. One way or another, he'll be finishing off the job that Mr Taylor began.

Bubble or not?

EDDIE GEORGE, Governor of the Bank of England, reckons investors need strong nerves. In a speech the day before yesterday he warned of further storm clouds looming over financial markets. The reaction was pretty telling - the FTSE-100 index leapt by more than 2 per cent. It was similar to the way technology stocks reacted to the pundits' verdict on their midweek setback, that the internet bubble had burst. It might do one day, but it certainly hasn't yet.

The question as to whether or not there is a bubble, bound to burst eventually, in US share prices, has become key to predicting what will happen to the world economy. It seems a slender thread, but share prices of over-hyped companies like Amazon.com could prove the bell-

weather for jobs and growth in the rest of the world.

If Wall Street and Nasdaq take a serious dive, the US economy might follow, and it has never been more true that if America sneezes, the rest of us will catch cold. To the casual glance, a chart of the Dow over ten years makes it plain that there is a bubble. The line climbs gently until it sears exponentially from early 1996. Can there be any justification for it?

The answer at one level is that, whether warranted or not, there is little to burst the bubble until the Federal Reserve raises interest rates. As things stand, there is nothing on the horizon to set Mr Greenspan sharpening his needle. Inflation is as remote as it has ever been - not one of the usual danger signals, from commodity prices to wage pressures, is flashing.

At a psychological level, people divide into gut optimists and pessimists about the right level for equities. Americans tend to be optimists about the existence of a "new economy", justifying at least a part of the gains on Wall Street. So do people who work closely with the new technologies. They see their businesses expanding so fast they can hardly keep up. As for the pes-

simists, they keep on banging on about the "unsustainability" of the American economic miracle. For how much longer can foreign capital be expected to keep financing the US's spending binge?

This column's position on these matters is perhaps not a particularly helpful one. It is not comfortable to be caught between two stools when the two positions seem to be diverging further and further, but doing the mental splits is the only intellectually honest stance at the moment. As long as cheap money and the ongoing prospect of it remains the dominant feature of developed economies, equity markets should hold firm, albeit with plenty of turbulence along the way.

British Telecom

IT MAY be hard to believe now, but it was only two years ago that British Telecom seemed doomed to a future of managed decline. Brush new operators with faster networks and better service were snapping up its most lucrative business customers. International charges were tumbling. And its overseas strategy was in tatters after its merger

with MCI began to come apart at the seams. All that was left, the experts opined, was BT's residential network, which offered little growth prospect.

BT shares powered through £10 yesterday; it was easy to rubbish that analysis. However, it was broadly correct in all but one key respect - far from being dull, BT's local network has turned out to be a goldmine.

Consumers have caught internet fever and every time they log on BT reaps the benefit. What's more, people tend to spend a lot longer on the line when they're surfing than when they're chatting to a friend down the road. BT reckons 15 per cent of the traffic on its network is internet-related and thinks this will rise to at least 20 per cent next year. New technologies offering high-speed internet access over the standard copper line will further boost demand.

The cash being thrown off is helping to fund a series of expensive overseas investments and a £10bn joint venture with AT&T. These may yet prove to be worthwhile, although it is still too early to tell. But if BT does establish itself as a global telecom operator, remember that it was its boring old residential business that paid for it all.

O'Neill takes the helm at Barclays

News Analysis: The City welcomed the former BankAmerica director's appointment - some see it as a sign that a merger is on the cards



Mike O'Neill (left) announces his appointment as CEO with Sir Peter Middleton and Andrew Buxton yesterday

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

BARCLAYS BANK yesterday appointed Michael O'Neill, a former chief financial officer of BankAmerica, as its new chief executive, plugging the gap left by Martin Taylor's surprise decision to leave the job last November.

Mr O'Neill, 32, a half-Belgian, former US marine lieutenant who claims to have spent more time in London than anywhere else, is the first foreigner to have been appointed to what is one of British banking's most prestigious posts.

Mr O'Neill will receive a salary including pensions and allowances worth £2.3m in his first year plus performance-related share options worth £3.4m at current prices. That compares with Mr Taylor's package of £738,000 last year.

As a gesture of commitment, he has also agreed to buy £5m worth of Barclays shares out of his own pocket, which Barclays has agreed to match. The shares will be forfeited if he leaves the bank within three years. Mr O'Neill's share options will also be exercisable within that period. Barclays was clearly mindful of the experience of Cable & Wireless, which lured Dick Brown from the US to be chief executive, only to lose him 18 months later when he returned to the US to run computer group EDS.

The news that the bank had landed a senior American banker was well received in the City where Barclays share price soared 6 per cent to £14.20 yesterday.

There had been fears that a long delay in finding a replacement for Mr Taylor could leave the bank rudderless at a time when urgent strategic decisions need to be made. But Mr O'Neill denied he had been brought in to steer Barclays towards a merger with another bank or to shut off or shut down Barclays Capital, the group's troublesome bond broking business.

However, Mr O'Neill has played a key role in two of Amer-

ica's biggest banking mergers - the first, in 1994, as chief financial officer of Continental Illinois, where he led the team that negotiated the merger with BankAmerica, and then last year when again as chief financial officer he was instrumental in forging the same bank's merger with rival Nationsbank. He does not come over as a man happy to stand still.

abroad, raises interesting possibilities. He knows the American banking scene inside out, and his appointment will put Barclays on the map as far as the US industry is concerned.

"Barclays will not be thinking merger with its share price at £14," said Richard Coleman, banks analyst at Merrill Lynch. "However a more interesting line of thought is a UK and US

City gossip had been that Barclays' search for a chief executive had drawn a blank.

Sir Peter emphasised the similarities between Barclays and Bank of America - a large, mainly retail bank with operations in Asia and Latin America - and said that he would fit in with Barclays' culture.

"He has an excellent reputation for getting things done and in a way which will carry the bank with him," he said.

He added, in a remark that betrays Sir Peter's feelings about what was lacking in Martin Taylor: "I will get on with him, although that is not the most important thing."

The big question though is why did Mr O'Neill want the job? There is no doubt that since the BankAmerica and Nationsbank deal he had been sidelined, emerging from the post-merger power struggle with the lesser role of head of private banking.

His former colleague, the chairman and chief executive David Coulter, also left the bank last year in what amounted to a coup by the Nationsbank camp, and there had been rumours that Mr O'Neill had been unhappy for some time.

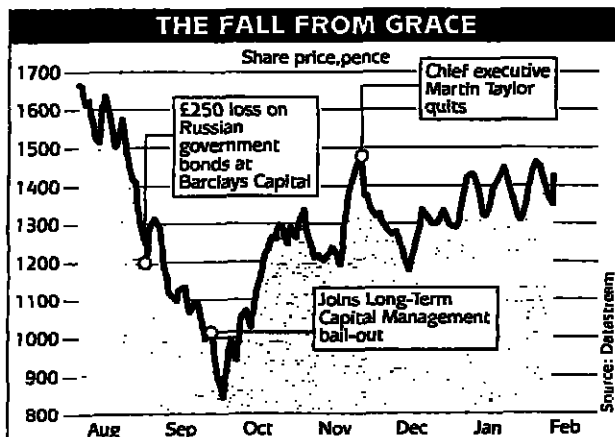
Mr O'Neill had been on Barclays' hit list since late last year even though he was not approached until Mr Taylor left in December. He was interviewed last month and signed on the dotted line after a Barclays board meeting on Wednesday.

Mr O'Neill plays down his dissatisfaction, insisting that when he was approached about the Barclays job, he felt that the opportunity to run one of the world's premier banks is not one that comes around too often. "I did not need much selling to take the job," he said.

Ray Softer, an analyst with the American firm Brown Brothers Harriman who has known Mr O'Neill for 15 years, said that the fact that he was on the wrong side in the power struggle that followed the BankAmerica Nationsbank merger did not make him second rate.

Mr O'Neill, he says, is an experienced banker and Bank of America is America's largest bank. He is also a wealthy man who did not need to work again.

"The Bank of America experience will stand him in good stead. Like Martin Taylor he is bright and he is dedicated to shareholder value. Unlike Taylor he has spent his career in banking."



MICHAEL O'NEILL

Born: 31 October, 1946
1969: BA in European civilisation at Princeton University
1974: MBA at University of Virginia
1969-71: US Marine Corp
1974-85: Continental Bank, Assignments in Belgium, Hong Kong and London
1985-88: London-based independent consultant
1989: Rejoins Continental as head of mergers and acquisitions
1993: Chief financial officer at Continental
1995: Chief financial officer at BankAmerica after it merges with Continental
1998: President, principal investing & wealth management at Bank of America after BankAmerica-Nationsbank merger

"When you are as large as this company is, you need to look at mergers as one of the things you do to add value," he said yesterday.

Analysts said that to move immediately on the merger front would clearly be rash, but in the longer term, the choice of an American, who learnt French at his mother's knee and who has spent most of his working life

deal - that is a natural way to go." Mr O'Neill has made a substantial personal fortune out of shares and share options, and is very focused on the share price. At Bank of America he insisted on rigid risk controls.

Sir Peter Middleton, who stood in as caretaker after Mr Taylor left Barclays, was visibly delighted with his catch, not least because for months the

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-div
Amalgamated (I)	14.56m (15.21m)	1.15m (1.07m)	20.8p (19.3p)	3.4p (3.3p)	14.04.98	15.02.98
British Telecommunications (H)	13.25m (11.93m)	3.48m (2.54m)	37.5p (20.1p)	1.1p	28.04.98	-
Capita Group (F)	237.80m (172.90m)	27.02m (18.51m)	9.01p (6.51p)	2.85p (2.1p)	16.04.99	01.03.99
Car Business Group (F)	31.02m (32.49m)	7.11m (6.32m)	8.23p (7.79p)	2.53p (1.1p)	11.05.98	-
RPS Group (F)	28.27m (20.50m)	5.00m (3.76m)	15.05p (11.05p)	-	-	-

(F) - Full (I) - Interim (H) - Quarterly (SP) - Split Period (M) - Nine Months

Amey's anger at share 'inflation'

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

AMEY, the construction group which is stalking Servisair, has complained to the Takeover Panel accusing the airport services group of issuing statements that could artificially inflate its share price.

The complaint by Amey, which launched an £81.5m hostile bid for the company last month, centres on the revelation that Stephen Walls, one of Servisair's directors, is connected to a potential counter-bidder - believed to be the venture capitalist Compass.

Amey and the Takeover Panel refused to comment yesterday. However, it is understood that Amey told the Panel that the statement, made in Servisair's defence document, could lead to a "false market"

in the shares of the ground handling group. According to insiders, Amey is concerned that market hopes of a higher offer from another suitor could push the Servisair shares artificially higher. But the sources said there was no suggestion that Servisair was deliberately trying to increase its share price. The stock has risen 2.5p to 221p, against Amey's 200p per share offer, since the publication of the defence document.

Amey is believed to have asked the Panel to put pressure on Servisair and Compass to declare their hands with an official stock exchange announcement. It also wants the Servisair chairman John Willis to clarify remarks made to newspapers that there were "more than two" potential bidders for the company.

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BMW in £1bn plan for Rover plant

BY MICHAEL HARRISON
Business Editor

BMW IS considering building a new generation of small-to-medium sized cars and utility vehicles at Rover's Longbridge plant in Birmingham, provided the Government contributes up to £300m towards the £1bn cost of the programme.

The cars and utility vehicles would be built on a common platform and would increase output from Longbridge to 500,000 a year, turning the threatened plant into a financially viable operation.

Joachim Milberg, the new BMW chairman, has already ordered a sweeping overhaul of Rover which will convert it from a stand-alone business into a fully-integrated part of the BMW empire. This involves combining purchasing, marketing and distribution activities.

The short-term future of Longbridge looks secure following confirmation that production of the new Mini will go ahead next year. However, any long-term rescue plan for Longbridge is likely to involve further job losses on top of the 2,500 pushed through last year.

The new family of front-wheel cars being examined by BMW include a replacement for the Rover 200-400 series, a multi-purpose utility vehicle

similar to the Renault Scenic and possibly a small BMW-type car.

It is unlikely, however, that the two car model ranges would be merged since BMW cars are rear-wheel drive while Rovers are front-wheel drive.

Tony Woodley, national car industry negotiator for the Transport and General Workers Union, met the new Rover chairman Werner Samman yesterday and said afterwards: "There are no decisions taken but what BMW is examining is how it can maximise the capacity of the plant and seeing whether it can make Longbridge pay by producing a family of cars from one platform."

Mr Woodley also spoke yesterday to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Stephen Byers, who has pledged that the Government will do all it can to keep Longbridge open and provide it with a secure future.

Output from the plant, which produces the Rover 200/400, Mini and MGF, is currently running at around 300,000. But in order to make it viable, production would need to be raised by at least 200,000.

That could be achieved with the new Mini, which is scheduled to be produced at a rate of 100,000 to 150,000, and two new models built on the same platform.



COR BOONSTRA, president of the Dutch electronics giant Philips Electronics, at a press conference yesterday, where he announced that profits would be lower in the first two quarters of 1999 than last year, when the company enjoyed a strong start.

show an improvement over 1998. The company still plans to raise profits by more than 10 per cent a year from the 1998 base of 2.7bn-2.8bn guilders (£350 to £380m), and achieve a return of 24 per cent on net assets. Last year's programme of share buy-backs may continue in 1999.

Fred Ernst/Reuters

Pub group in further talks

BY NIGEL COPE

INN BUSINESS, the tenanted pub group, said yesterday that it had received other "opportunistic" takeover approaches following the overture from Enterprise Inns last month.

However, Alan Jackson, Inn Business' chief executive, said none of the talks had led to a firm offer and that he had not heard from Enterprise since the original announcement on 25 January. "The [Enterprise] approach has not led to an offer. The ball is in their court," Mr Jackson said, adding: "The board want the business to remain an independent company."

He was speaking as Inn Business reported a 20 per cent rise in full-year profits to £7.6m and a statement which some analysts said read like a defence document.

The group has revalued its pub estate, adding an extra £13.5m to net asset value. This has increased the net asset value per share by 49 per cent to 70p, compared to yesterday's

closing share price of 60p. The group also increased the final dividend by 48 per cent, taking the total payout to 2.5p.

Inn Business yesterday announced a further expansion with the £5.8m acquisition of Trent Taverns which operates 82 tenanted pubs mainly in the south and west of England. This follows the deal announced last month to buy a 23.5 per cent stake in Scorpio Inns which owns 111 tenanted pubs in the west of England and in South Wales. The deals take the group's pub estate to almost 700 pubs. The aim is to reach 1,000 pubs in the next few years.

The group admitted that like for like beer volumes were down in current trading but said margins and rental income were both higher.

The number of Hooten Horse managed outlets has been increased from 9 to 20 with the plan to reach 30 by the end of next year. The group said the pubs' spicy-food offering was proving popular, with weekly takings averaging £4,750.

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IN BRIEF

Cookson to cut 700 jobs worldwide in £70m restructuring programme

COOKSON, the ceramics, electronics and engineering group, yesterday unveiled details of a restructuring programme that will cost £70m over the next two years and save £8.5m in the current year plus £14.5m a year in subsequent years.

The shares jumped 11 per cent to 145p in response to the news before closing 12p better on the day at 140.5p.

Profits in 1998, excluding exceptional items, will be at the top end of market forecasts of £145m to £150m, thanks to a better than expected performance in the final quarter, the chief executive Stephen Howard said yesterday. The latest rationalisation programme will streamline the organisation, simplify the product range and cut 700 jobs worldwide or about 4.5 per cent of the workforce over the next 12 months.

Carbo buys Italian group for £4.1m

CARBO, the Manchester-based maker of industrial abrasives and plastic injection mouldings, has bought BMA Group, an Italian maker of industrial abrasives, for £4.1m in cash, almost half of which is payable over the next two years.

The existing BMA management will be retained and the acquisition will be earnings enhancing in the first full year. Carbo shares, which touched 94p last May, rose 0.5p to 12.5p.

Singapore buys 10 Airbus planes

SINGAPORE AIRLINES has signed a \$1.4bn contract to buy up to 10 Airbus Industrie ultra-long-range A340-500 aircraft, Airbus said yesterday.

The aircraft consortium said the contract for five firm orders and five options confirmed a previously announced commitment to buy the new four-engine aircraft, which will enable Singapore Airlines to fly non-stop between South-east Asia and destinations such as Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Notice to Halifax borrowers.

The variable base rate for Halifax plc mortgage accounts (but not secured personal loan accounts) will be decreased by 0.50% p.a. to 6.95% p.a.

The new interest rate will take effect from 1st March 1999 for existing borrowers.

The monthly payment will be amended from the next review date for mortgage accounts on Annual Review and from April 2000 for mortgage accounts on Budget Plan.



BT call
to a re
recovery

BT calls Footsie to a resounding recovery

FOOTSI'S SIX-DAY losing run ended with a resounding recovery in often hectic trading. The blue chip index closed 118.3 points higher at 5,888.5, with share turnover again topping 12 billion.

Indeed, one of the most remarkable aspects of this year's stock market performance has been the steady trading volumes which should, at least on the surface, bring comfort to many harassed traders allegedly threatened with redundancy.

Last year 1 billion turnover levels were rare, so far this year they have occurred with monotonous regularity. One explanation is the increased interest in non Footsie shares. The mid and small cap indices have enjoyed strong runs this year as takeover activity has drawn attention to the hitherto ignored values lurking on the undercard. The mid cap index rose 29.4 to 5,187 and the small cap index kept up its remarkable run with a further 9.5 gain to 2,225.8.

A strong New York display and better-than-expected com-

CALLUNA, the electronics group famed for its computer security system, firmed 2.75p to 29.75p. The arrival of an Austrian group on the share register prompted the excitement. Volksbank Kapitalanlagen has built a 6.29 per cent shareholding.

Loss-making Calluna has had an eventful market ride. The shares have brushed 40p in the past year and three years ago surged to 95.75p. Their low point is 8.5p, touched last year.

pany developments helped inspire yesterday's sudden recovery.

Best performing blue chip was BT as the market struggled to come to terms with its unexpected sales surge and profits fall. The shares rose an incredible 11.2 per cent to 1,009.5p as sales rather than profits caught the eye. A remarkable sea volume of more than 32 million shares underlined the excitement.

Not surprisingly other telecom shares found themselves chasing the right numbers. Colt Telecom recovered 85p to 1,133p and Cable & Wireless 49p to 82.45p.

Glaxo Wellcome was on a high, up 99p to 2,025p. The drugs group, it is believed, was engaged in a detailed presentation relating to some of its drugs, possibly in the US. Results are due next week with the market looking for around 22.5bn, down from 22.7bn in the previous year.

Although Glaxo suffered a flat profits year many analysts are convinced growth is about to resume. But there is a wide spread belief that Glaxo needs another deal. For a long while the market felt it would descend on Zeneca, but it has so far shown no inclination to barge into the drug group's proposed merger with Astra.

A spitting bid for Zeneca, up

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

25p to 2,579p, must remain a possibility before the Astra deal goes before Zeneca shareholders next week.

Lloyds TSB, with figures today, rose 26.5p to 784.5p. A nagging suspicion lurks that the Black Horse group could accompany its results with a takeover strike. But the punters in Allied Irish Banks, a favourite for the Lloyds treatment, seemed to have given up the ghost with the shares easing 3.5p to 1,107.5p.

Other banks moved ahead with Barclays, on the arrival of Michael O'Neill as chief executive, jumping 74p to 1,420p. Mortgage banks, hit hard in recent days as worries have multiplied about competition in the housing market, staged a moderate rally with Halifax 27p firmer at 736p.

Beers were as flat as yesterday's pint. Although the European Union cleared Whitbread's pub leases, the

shares fell 37.5p to 869p. Apparently the brewer failed to impress Schroders at a one-to-one meeting. Bass lost 20.5p to 786.5p and Scottish & Newcastle 22p to 704.5p. Worries of bids for either First Leisure or Vaux weighed on sentiment.

Struggling Allied Domecq had to contend with negative comments from BT Alex Brown, falling 7.5p to 451p. LucasVarity lost 9p to 279.75p as Federal-Mogul, the US group, decided not to pay the ransom a counter to TRW's offer would require.

The Asda/Safeway merger rumours evaporated, leaving Safeway 9.25p lower at 289.25p although Asda firmed 1.75p to 156.5p.

PowderJect Pharmaceuticals was another of the day's outstanding performers. The shares soared a remarkable 23 per cent to 870p following a deal with a Swiss group, Ares-Serono. PP has clinched a £100m agreement to develop five needle-free injection systems. The deal sent analysts scurrying for their calculators.

A spitting bid for Zeneca, up

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A spitting bid for Zeneca, up

and suggestions of a 1,100p target went the rounds. The group is taking advantage of its Swiss link by raising £52m by offering shares at 670p.

Holiday groups responded to Airtours' encouraging summer bookings. Airtours gained 27p to 441p and Thomson Travel, the subject of takeover rumours last week, rose 8p to 165p. House builders pushed ahead, encouraged by Bank of England indications of yet lower interest rates. Barratt Developments ended 8p higher at 268.5p and Berkeley 33.5p to 565p.

Allday, the convenience stores chain that has had a difficult time, jumped 16.5p to 88.5p. Trading was heavy, sparking speculation that the group, clearly vulnerable to a bid, was attracting predatory attention. The shares were 621.5p last summer as the convenience concept caught the imagination of the market. One unlikely suggestion was that struggling cash-and-carry chain Booker could strike a deal with Allday. Booker, where vague rumours of a bid from

THE DEVELOPMENT OF Vital Group into a wide-ranging financial operation continues with Swedish businessman Dag Palmer lifting his stake to 10.3 per cent.

Chief executive Martin Savage, with 36.2 per cent, plans to create a fund management and stockbroking group. The Ofex traded company has had a number of incarnations: it was called Bearbull Active Strategy Investment before switching to Vital. The shares are currently 4.5p.

the US retailing giant Wal-Mart have circulated, firmed 3p to 70.5p. It, too, has fallen from lofty heights, four years ago the shares were rising at 460p.

Storehouse, the Mother-care chain where bid talk has been heard, rose 6p to 135.5p in brisk trading. BICC, the cables and construction group that has attracted speculative interest, jumped 4.5p to 85.5p. Another to get the rumoured bid treatment was McBride, which makes own label detergents. It jumped 11p to 102.5p.

Tandem, the subject of a proposed revamp, trundled along at 2.75p, against 9.75p last spring. The cycle group had hoped to sell its Falcon brand but talks have broken down. The failure to unload Falcon means Tandem's hopes of becoming a horse-racing business have had to be abandoned.

Water Hall, the waste management group, fell 1p to 16.5p after announcing a £4m placing at 14.5p a share.

Eclipse Blinds rose a further 7p to 94.5p on the bid approach and Diacon jumped 51.5p to 227.5p after signing an alliance with the US GTR group to provide Internet security for European business users.

SEAQ VOLUME: 1.2bn
SEAQ TRADES: 73,591
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Capita seeks growth in human resources

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

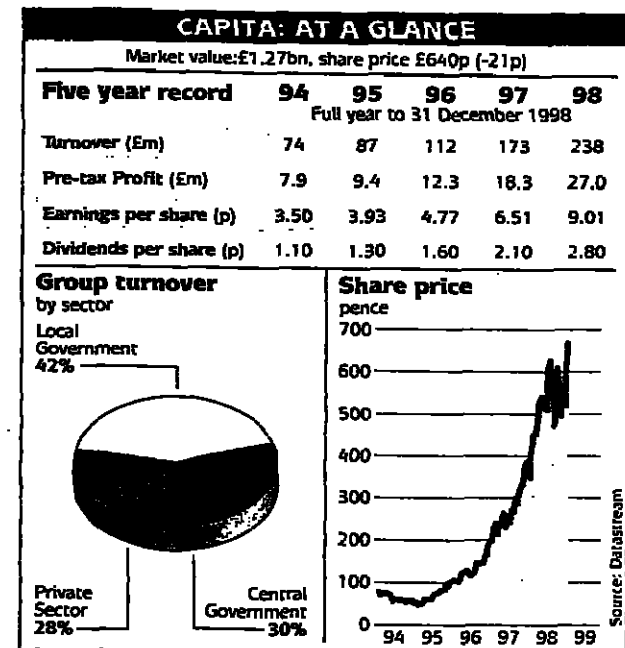
CAPITA, the outsourcing group, is targeting the human resources and education sectors for expansion as it attempts to maintain its phenomenal growth record.

Rod Aldridge, Capita's executive chairman, expects large companies to start outsourcing their human resources departments over the next few years as they try to cut costs and concentrate on their main businesses.

Capita is already a major supplier of human resources services to local authorities, where it processes payroll and pensions for employees. In Westminster it has gone even further, taking over the local council's human resources department, including the recruitment of staff. Last year, its human resources division accounted for 19 per cent of revenues.

Mr Aldridge said private companies had so far been reluctant to hand over control of sensitive areas such as recruitment to third-party suppliers. But he predicted that "The contracts will come as confidence increases."

Few are willing to bet against him. In the late-1980s Capita pioneered outsourcing in local government by taking over the running of information technology departments. From there it has moved into areas



such as property services, administration, and training - each time spotting the new opportunity ahead of most of its rivals. "Human resources is an extension of their services," says Ian Jernyn, an analyst with Credit Lyonnais Laing. "They started with IT and each time they've graduated up the outsourcing curve."

This, combined with the overall growth in outsourcing, has propelled Capita's profits from £1.5m in 1988 - the year the company floated on the stock

market - to £27m last year. And there is no sign of growth slowing. Figures for 1998, released yesterday, showed profit growth of 48 per cent on turnover up 38 per cent to £238m.

During the year, Capita won contracts worth £270m, a 63 per cent increase over 1997. And yesterday it won another - a £10m, five-year contract to manage safety certification for contractors working for Railtrack.

Capita took another step into a new area yesterday when it revealed that a consortium of



Rod Aldridge: Executive chairman of Capita

which it is a member had been approved to train UK teachers in the use of IT as part of a £230m government-funded scheme.

Mr Aldridge said this was part of a wider push into the education sector. "All the ingredients are there," he said, although he added that the company was not interested in taking over the running of underperforming schools.

Capita shares, which had risen strongly ahead of the results, dipped 21p to 5640p on profit-taking yesterday even though analysts upgraded their forecasts of 1999 profits to £33m. On a forward earnings multiple of 58, the shares look expensive.

But analysts said that with a solid order book, good growth prospects, and little to fear from an economic downturn, the shares remain a solid hold.

Airtours hints at buying spree

BY NIGEL COPE

AIRTOURS, Britain's second largest tour operator, yesterday reported strong first quarter bookings and hinted at a possible £200m buying spree.

Airtours raised £250m via a bond issue in November before last raising an additional £50m. The company said yesterday that it was likely to use the funds for acquisitions, particularly in the US and mainland Europe.

"Further consolidation is not inevitable but we believe that there is a will among the major players to continue the process," the company said, hinting that there may also be further opportunities in the UK.

The news came as Airtours reported slightly increased losses of £19.4m in the traditionally loss-making first quarter. But the shares soared 27p to 441p on a current trading upturn which showed that UK winter bookings are 6 per cent ahead of last year, with like-for-like bookings for the summer up by a healthy 5 per cent.

Capacity has also been cut by 5 per cent as the industry gradually learns the lesson that it is more important to sell fewer holidays at full prices.

The millennium factor is also starting to kick in with winter 1999 sales 20 per cent up on last year, with higher prices too. Margins are up in the US on lower sales as the company stripped out less profitable holidays and Scandinavia is also trading well.

The figures pleased analysts although Bruce Jones at Merrill Lynch said: "It looks good but with this sector you can never take your eye off it."

He pointed out that Thomas Cook, one of Airtours' main high street competitors, has also been trading well.

On full-year profit forecasts of £163m the shares trade on a forward multiple of 17 and still languish well below their 541p, 12-month peak in May.

"This is a 15 per cent discount to the market and it really deserves a market rating," said one analyst.

PowderJect soars after Swiss deal

POWDERJECT, the maker of the "needleless syringe", yesterday underlined its status as one of the UK's most successful biotechnology companies with a £100m deal with the Swiss drug group Ares-Serono.

The agreement was accompanied by a £28m share placing to finance the development of six vaccines for use in PowderJect's revolutionary device. The two announcements sent PowderJect's shares soaring as analysts moved to upgrade their share price targets.

The stock closed up 23 per cent to an all-time high of 870p, adding more than £100m to the group's market value.

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

Under the Ares deal, the Swiss group, a world leader in infertility treatment, will pay \$90m over at least three years and take a \$10m equity stake for the rights to adapt five of its drugs to PowderJect's pain-free syringe. The device uses a burst of high-pressure helium instead of a needle.

The two companies declined to specify which Ares drugs were involved in the deal, but analysts indicated that Gonaf, Ares' best-selling infertility treatment, was likely to be among them. They added that if the trials were successful, the

new Ares products could be on the market within three years.

The agreement with Ares, a well-respected pharmaceutical group with sales of around \$1bn and a market value of over \$6bn, is a further endorsement of PowderJect's technology. The list of the company's other partners, including Glaxo Wellcome, Roche and Pfizer, suggests that major drug groups believe in the syringe's potential. The market is also pleased with PowderJect's determination to develop its own drugs.

Yesterday's 870p per share placing will be used to adapt to the syringe a number of existing vaccines, including in-

fluenza, hepatitis B and tetanus boosters.

Paul Drayson, chief executive, said the company's strategy of looking for a partner at the end of the second phase of clinical trial would enable it to reap royalties of around 40 per cent instead of the usual 6-12 per cent.

The City believes in PowderJect and shares have soared almost fourfold since the 1997 float. With no product until the millennium and the first profit due in 2002, they might look expensive. But the technology has potential and more deals are in the pipeline. As one analyst said: "You don't sell PowderJect, the story is just too good."

Currie's next chapter

EDWINA CURRIE is back. Relax, not in politics. The former Tory MP is to address the Women's Group of the Society of Practitioners of Insolvency on 9 March about her latest novel.

There are doubts amongst the liquidators and lawyers that make up the Woman's Group whether Ms Currie will be as big a draw as last year's speaker, Cherie Booth, the Prime Minister's wife and successful barrister, who attracted more than 120 people to the meeting.

Since leaving politics Ms Currie has spent her time writing pot-boilers as well as presenting *Late Night Currie*, a chat show on Radio Five. The woman's meeting will be at the office of Cameron McKenna, the City law firm, and Ms Currie will talk about her latest tome, as yet unpublished, called *The Ambassador*. It is a science-fiction novel rather than one of her usual bodice-rippers, I am told.

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

Left-wing links

WHILE WE'RE on the subject, Tom King was a socialist firebrand in his youth. OK, not the former Tory cabinet minister, but Tom King the former director of corporate affairs at Standard Life who retired this week after 32 years with the company.

Mr King, 57, left his more left-wing leanings behind him some time ago. According to a colleague, "golfing is his life". Another says that Mr King's main passion, after his family and work colleagues, is "fine wines". Not much proletarian solidarity there.

Mr King joined the Edinburgh based insurer in July 1967 as a tax specialist. He spent much of the 1970s in the



Growing pains

IN 31's January issue of its magazine QED Professor John Kay of Oxford University's Said Business School takes the sword to companies that pursue mergers for the sake of size.

"Never has the cult of gigantism gone so far," fulminates the professor. Strangely, Professor Kay neglects to mention 31's current bid for Electra In-

vestment Trust. I'm sure 31's bid is purely based on competitive advantage...

Love online

AS VALENTINE'S DAY hoves into view (it's Sunday, chaps) why not try sending a virtual Valentine to your loved one? You can have a love poem generated just for you on <http://www.sparks.co.uk>.

Then there's "Build a date" in which you create your perfect man/woman on <http://valentine.infospace.com/>. More conventionally you can create your Valentine cards online with <http://www.evcserve.com/cards/>.

Lisa's demise

ROLL OVER Lisa, Pippa's arrived. Let me explain. Daniel Godfrey, director general of the Association of Investment Trust Companies (AITC), noticed that the Government's proposals announced last week on pensions seemed to be

dumping the acronym LISA - or "Lifetime Individual Savings Account". LISA is the Government's idea for allowing people to take out a pension by going direct to a unit trust company.

If Lisa has left town, Mr Godfrey wonders, who should replace her? His suggestion is Pippa - or "Portable Individual Pension Provision Account". He also thought up four other possible acronyms. A commendable use of the director general's time, no doubt.

Star & stripes

AN AMERICAN law firm which specialises in IT, Shaw Pittman Potts & Trowbridge, has just opened an office in London. But its links with the UK go back rather longer. Ramsey Potts, the firm's founder, was a bomber pilot during the Second World War and flew his missions out of England. He was also the commanding officer of one James Stewart, matinee idol.

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FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Country	Sterling Spot	1 month	3 months	Dollar Spot	1 month	3 months	Euro Spot	1 month	3 months
UK	1.0000			0.6158	0.6161	0.6163	0.6956		
Australia	2.5031	2.5023	2.5016	1.5414	1.5416	1.5418	1.7412		
Canada	1.5780	1.5778	1.5776	12.182	12.180	12.178	13.7603		
France	6.5922	6.5917	6.5912	35.712	35.663	35.548	40.340		
Germany	2.4196	2.4187	2.4178	1.4900	1.4902	1.4904	1.6931		
Italy	10.700	10.684	10.654	6.8889	6.8844	6.8800	7.4428		
Japan	1.4376	1.4361	1.4344	0.8853	0.8840	0.8811	1.0000		
Norway	8.5475	8.5320	8.5010	5.2636	5.254	5.233	5.9596		
Sweden	9.4380	9.413	9.378	7.7491	7.7291	7.705	8.3457		
Switzerland	2.8117	2.8065	2.7963	1.7314	1.7291	1.7255	1.9558		
Denmark	46.88	46.84	46.79	74.80	74.75	74.69	82.19		
Greece	1.5017	1.5012	1.5004	7.7491	7.7291	7.705	8.3457		
Hong Kong	1.322	1.3201	1.3180	0.6972	0.6963	0.6954	0.7876		
India	278.5	277.5	276.5	11.41	11.41	11.41	12.947		
Indonesia	186.16	185.41	184.66	3.8880	3.8880	3.8880	4.2925		
Malaysia	6.1708	6.1608	6.1523	1.7204	1.7204	1.7204	1.7204		
Philippines	16.251	16.237	16.221	1.9491	1.9491	1.9491	2.2037		
Singapore	2.0467	2.0461	2.0455	0.5511	0.5510	0.5509	0.5509		
Taiwan	2.4677	2.4671	2.4665	1.6120	1.6119	1.6118	1.6118		
Thailand	2.9817	2.9811	2.9805	7.6197	7.6197	7.6197	8.6070		
USA	1.3173	1.3169	1.3165	17.748	17.748	17.748	20.048		
South Africa	5.9058	5.9052	5.9046	1.7352	1.7352	1.7352	1.7352		
South Korea	6.0908	6.0902	6.0896	1.6885	1.6885	1.6885	1.6885		
Spain	16.251	16.237	16.221	6.0555	6.0555	6.0555	6.0555		
Sweden	9.4380	9.413	9.378	14.730	14.730	14.730	16.638		
Switzerland	2.8117	2.8065	2.7963	7.0636	7.0636	7.0636	8.0953		
Taiwan	2.4677	2.4671	2.4665	1.4175	1.4175	1.4175	1.4044		
Thailand	2.9817	2.9811	2.9805	1.0000			0.8953		

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.6239	1.0000	Oman	0.6252	0.3950
Brazil	3.0529	1.8900	Pakistan	83.306	51.300
China	13.442	8.2778	Philippines	61.195	35.300
Czech Rep	34.244	3.4293	Romania	6.0977	3.7500
Egypt	5.5407	3.4175	Russia	5.9102	3.6395
Ghana	26.505	2.3650	Saudi Arabia	36.9782	1.17500
Hong Kong	95.877	220.93	Singapore	190.81	32.275
India	68.195	42.450	Taiwan	59.841	36.850
Indonesia	14.087	3.8675	Thailand	55.555	34.080
Israel	0.4916	0.3028	Turkey	55.555	34.080
Japan	149.40	82.000	UAE	5.9464	3.6730

INTEREST RATES

UK	5.50%	Discount</
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SPORT

Football: Third Division Rochdale tonight make an occasion out of first game to be televised live from their ground

Spotland delights in TV spotlight

BY DERICK ALLSOP

ARSENAL DO it a lot and it made them £9.7m last season. Liverpool do it frequently, Ipswich do it when it's deemed attractive, and even Barnet have done it on occasions. Rochdale, however, have never done it. Not even the once.

This evening at Spotland all that is scheduled to change. When the club's Third Division game with Hull City is screened by Sky, The Dale will, at last, have had one of their matches shown live on television.

The club with the dubious distinction of an unbroken quarter-century in the Football League's bottom division, are suddenly discovering they have something to sing about after all. They appear to have averted the threat of relegation to the Conference for another season, their Auto Windscreens Shield victory at Stoke City has taken them to within three ties of Wembley, and today they will qualify for their first-ever "facilitation fee" for playing hosts to cameras that will transmit their performance live around the country.

As if that were not enough to bolster the terrace cred of their down-trodden supporters, Rochdale are also laying claim to the first football song. Forget all those choral howlers of the TV generations. The original match-day melody, it seems, was a certain "Pass, Shoot, Goal", circa 1931. Less amazing is the revelation this tribute to the heroic endeavours

'This is an opportunity to show what progress we have made at Rochdale, that we're not a run-down club going nowhere. We've got two new stands and plenty to be positive about'

of "My home town" boys was sung by Rochdale's most famous daughter, Gracie Fields.

More recent music prodigies to emerge from this corner of Lancashire, the band Alive, are being asked to breathe new life into the rhythmic relic. Whether they can be persuaded this is a wise career move remains to be seen, but Rochdale are satisfied their find is authentic.

"I'm totally convinced this was the first football song," Richard Bott, the club's communications director, said. "We're contacting Alive and hopefully they'll be able to do a new version of it."

Rochdale is an unlikely source of social, economic or cultural riches, much less the sporting kind. However, take the not so well worn path down to the football club and you will uncover a veritable treasure trove of "did-you-know's".

For instance: Did you know Rochdale had floodlights before Manchester United, Liverpool or Everton? Or that the fathers of two of England's World Cup winners played for the club, namely Charles Hurst and Alan Ball Sr. Another player there was Terry Owen, father of Michael.

This past week, Spotland has been the scene of frenetic prospecting for such 24-carat gems. Sky caused the rush when they decided to feature the fixture with Hull, thereby removing another club from



The scene at Spotland this week as Rochdale fight the frost in preparation to take their place among the clubs deemed worthy of a visit from the cameras

Peter Jay

the Football League shortlist of three – the others being Shrewsbury and Scarborough – of those clubs never granted 90 minutes of fame via live television.

The sense of occasion will be enhanced by second-half commentary on BBC Radio Five Live, and a programme put out from the ground by the Beeb's local station, GMR.

Not only will the exposure help to bring the club to the attention of a wider audience, but the facilitation fee will not go unappreciated. The Football League receives £25m from Sky each season for the rights to televise 60 games from the First, Second and Third Divisions. The First Division clubs get the largest share (48 of the 60 games are from that level and facilitation fees vary from £40,000 to £20,000 per team per match) but the rewards are not insubstantial lower down.

Rochdale, as a Third Division home side, will receive £30,000 for tonight, while Hull, as the visitors, will receive £10,000. This might not seem much compared to Arsenal's yearly television income, but it can quickly mount if cup games are screened. The £100,000 each side re-

ceives – regardless of division – for a televised Worthington Cup match can make the difference between a balanced budget and an extension on the overdraft.

Chris Hull, a spokesman for the Nationwide League, said the current television deals, even with apparent inequities between the highest levels and the less prominent, are hugely beneficial for the smaller clubs. "The current deal is better

than any previously, and can be essential to assist our clubs in survival."

Hull added that television coverage, aside from purely financial reasons, is also good for promotional reasons. Contrary to popular belief, he said, televised matches can actually add to ticket sales – because the game is more widely advertised and given a sense of occasion – rather cause people to watch at home.

Rochdale plan to exploit the ex-

posure and project the club in a light very different from their popular stereotype. They have distributed more than 2,000 tickets to schools in the town and are encouraging fans to generate a festive atmosphere with a display of imaginative banners.

They have even turned the old image of the no hope, dead-end club to their advantage, with a little help from John Gregory. The Aston

Villa manager responded to Stan Collymore's latest emotional trauma by suggesting the £20,000-a-week striker should look to the plight of a 29-year-old Rochdale player with three kids, a mortgage and three months on his contract for the true definition of stress.

Rochdale duly came up with Keith Hill, who has only two children, but otherwise fits the bill. And it takes him a year to earn what Collymore picks up in seven days.

"Every time somebody wants to make a point about clubs at the wrong end of the League Rochdale's name is thrown up and when Gregory mentioned us I thought 'Here we go again,'" Bott said. "But in fact, he's done us a favour. He's given us a bit of publicity."

"Getting the Sky cameras here is also good for the club. This is an opportunity to show what progress we have made at Rochdale, that we're not a run down club going nowhere. We've got two new stands and plenty to be positive about."

"We're encouraging the kids to come along and we're trying to get everybody into the spirit of the occasion."

Club officials and staff have also been doing everything humanly, and perhaps spiritually, possible to ensure the match goes ahead. Their home Auto Windscreens tie with Stoke was postponed four times and eventually switched to the Britannia Stadium.

Drainage problems, rather than overuse, were blamed, but Bolton Wanderers' midweek reserve game was judiciously removed from the schedule. Spotland is shared by the town's rugby league club, Hornets, and let out to Oldham rugby league club, as well as Bolton's second string footballers.

Such financial expediences can mean the difference between survival and extinction when home gates of more than 2,000 cannot be guaranteed. Rochdale have invested £2,000 for the hire of pitch covering and are confident they will defy the frost to put on their TV show and bank a fee that is the equivalent of Collymore's weekly pay packet.

"It'll be on all right," Bott said. "We'll make sure of that."

Derick Allsop is author of "Kicking in the Wind", which documents a year in the life of Rochdale F.C.

ROCHDALE: TEN CLAIMS TO FAME

1 When Rochdale drew 0-0 at Gretna Green in the First Round of the FA Cup on November 16, 1991 it was the first time a Football League club had played an FA Cup tie in Scotland this century and was featured on BBC's Match of the Day. Rochdale won the replay 3-1.

2 Rochdale are the only Fourth Division club (as it then was) to reach and stage the Football League Cup final, losing to Norwich in 1962 over two legs.

3 They provided an FA Cup Wembley hero. Alan Taylor joined West Ham United from Rochdale, for £40,000, just before Christmas in the 1974-75 season and scored both

of their goals in the 2-0 win over Fulham in the final.

4 Two Merseyside managerial legends started coaching at Rochdale – Harry Catterick (Everton) and Joe Fagan (Liverpool). Former managers include: Bob Stokoe and Eddie Gray.

5 Famous sons who have played for or managed Rochdale include Danny Czerand and Mick Docherty. Famous brothers: Brian and Jimmy Greenhoff.

6 Among players who began their careers at Spotland are Geoff Thomas, John Pemberton and David Cross.

7 Stephen Bywater made history in June last year when he signed professional forms for West Ham on his

17th birthday. The England Youth international goalkeeper's transfer from Rochdale was for an initial £300,000 building to a possible £2m-plus, based on appearances.

8 Rochdale are the only Fourth Division club to have won an FA Cup tie at Anfield. In the first round, in 1989-90, they beat Marine, of the Northern Premier League, 1-0.

9 Rochdale may have been in the lowest division for 25 consecutive seasons but they have finished bottom only twice, and not since 1980. In those 25 seasons, 11 clubs have dropped out of the Football League.

10 Celebrity fans include Cyril Smith and Jimmy Cricket.

Wells nudges to front of queue

IT MIGHT have become a hoary staple of sporting quizzes. Question: Can you name three English cricketers Wells to have only four one-day internationals between them? Answer: Colin (two matches in 1985, highest score 17), Alan (one match in 1985, scoring of 15) and the debutant, Tunbridge (the Nevill Ground of that ilk, one match in the 1983 World Cup, between India and Zimbabwe, highest score Kapil Dev, 175 not out after India were 18 for 5).

This jolly little wheeze has been rather spoiled by the recent advent of Vince (six matches up to the first final of the triangular tournament in Australia, highest score 39, best bowling 3 for 30 and still going strong). In a side that has been losing their way and their games he has been admirably imperturbable. Until two months ago the odds on Vince Wells playing for England were probably slightly longer than the routes taken by that other Wells – Fargo.

There was nothing wrong with his form. Wells is a key player in the Leicestershire team, which has secured two County Championship titles in three years, as opening batsman and medium-pace seam

Leicestershire's opening batsman is used to being a latecomer and at 33 he is making a good case for inclusion in England's World Cup squad. By Stephen Brenkley in Melbourne

bowler. He is as effective as anybody of his type, much superior to most. But last August he was 33. It is usually an age which captures the attention only of those selectors doing some initial scouting for over-35 sides.

The England panel, however, was bent on a deliberate policy which might have seemed to be aimed at making every cricketer in England a one-day international but was actually designed to give a chance to many so that the correct few could eventually be chosen for the World Cup. On this basis Wells might have been nearer the front of the queue.

"I think as long as you're playing you never give up hope of being in the England team," he said. "You might be 35 and the chance will come along." Perhaps only in England but Wells (and to a slightly lesser extent the other uncapped veteran, Mark Alleyne, who sadly had to leave the tour of Australia this week when his father died) has rewarded the faith

in the virtues of maturity and experience.

He has not taken the Carlton & United Series by storm but with every match he has looked more established. The progress has been discernible both in his returns and his demeanour. In the opening match against Australia at Brisbane there was the suspicion that he might be overworn. There were 18,000 people packed into a searingly hot Gabele and neither the crowd nor the climate are familiar by their presence at Grace Road.

In his second match there were 30,000 at Melbourne and he went for 20 in his first three overs of international cricket. In his third at Adelaide, Muttiah Muralitharan was called for throwing, Sri Lanka made a wonderful list of chasing 303 to win and Wells had to bowl the last over when they succeeded. It had never been like this before.

"I try to remain the same whether I've done badly or well," he said of the twin imposters. "I try not

to get involved in the ups and downs of a cricketer's life."

It was the equable temperament that began to serve him so well in this tournament. England have played less well as the series has progressed and on Wednesday they reached their nadir when, with the match well in hand, they lost five wickets for six runs. As their manager David Graveney put it they have been losing rather than being beaten. "There is a difference," he said.

The World Cup selection picture might not be opaque yet but it is a near thing. With so many players, especially batsmen, not performing, the crystal clear view which ought to have emerged by now has not. Wells, at least and perhaps unexpectedly, is one of those now in full view.

"The things that have been most difficult to adapt to have been the difference in crowds and the atmosphere they generate," he said. "You know you're in a big match."

But as for the vast gap in standards and whether he had noticed the chasm he said: "Not really. It's a jump but it's more of a jump with the other things. I think it's helped that the England management team have encouraged me to play my own game."

At Sydney the other night, Wells bowled with enormous composure. He assessed the pace of the pitch correctly, kept it mean and accounted for three of the top four. When he batted he put on 67 with Nasser Hussain. Hussain was out of sorts and when he played a maiden in the 41st over of the innings, no less, Wells responded by striking a clean six off the first ball of the next over. He was to be cleaned up in the collapse but you knew then of the virtues of experience, maturity and an equable temperament.

Wells was a late starter. Football was his preferred passion and his intended profession as a boy but when he was 16 Leyton Orient, on whose schoolboy books he had been enrolled for four years, let him go. He played some Conference football for Dartford but cricket was now to be the fore.

He was at Kent until 1991 but never broke through. "One of those things, they had a team and it was



Wells: Never gives up hope

difficult to get into"). In 1991 he fell for the wiles of Jack Birkenhead at Leicestershire. It was the making of him. At the start of the 1996 season he was converted to an opener. He began to make hundreds and to go on to double hundreds.

Last season, albeit by a bit of a fluke, he topped the first-class bowling averages (climbing 118 places in taking 30 at 15) but it was evidence of his adherence to sound principles. Wells of England has never had a more comfortable ring about it.

Waugh is backed by Warne

STEVE WAUGH, who is expected to be named as the Australian Test side's new captain today, has received the support of Shane Warne, his main rival for the job. "I just expect Steve to be captain basically, like everybody else does," Warne said in Melbourne yesterday.

Waugh is favourite to become the new Test captain in place of Mark Taylor, who retired from international cricket last week. The batsman was established as Australia's one-day captain, but has missed most of the triangular series against England and Sri Lanka through injury.

The captaincy decision would have been more clear-cut had Warne not proved such an effective replacement in Waugh's absence. Waugh has won six consecutive matches under Warne's captaincy. His attacking fields and extrovert leadership have been a revelation, and despite his modesty he admits he would relish the role of captain.

"I'd like to think I've a chance. I think I've grabbed my opportunity in the one-dayers and done a pretty good job," Warne said.

Henman has the strategy for success

THE RESILIENT side of Tim Henman's game saw him through to the quarter-finals of the \$1m (£600,000) Dubai Duty Free Open last night. In spite of intense pressure, the British No 1 simply refused to allow Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman more than the sniff of a third set.

Henman's win, 6-3, 7-6, after an hour and 41 minutes, was achieved by adopting sensible back-court play when necessary to buttress his attacking style, mixed with the odd stroke of fortune that his overall performance deserved.

Having lost the last three of their four previous matches - his only victory was on grass in Nottingham in 1995 - Henman bolstered his confidence against probably the most accomplished all-round opponent he has met so far this year, certainly the best returner of serve.

Settling into the contest after losing serve in the opening game, Henman's only other distraction en route to securing the first set after 40 minutes was a flickering light from a photographer's lamp at the back of the court. Breaks for 1-1 and 4-2 gave him a platform for what was follow in the second set.

Henman's first crucial escape was from 0-40 in the sixth game as Bjorkman mounted his attack. The Swede disputed a call on the third set point, but had no answer to Henman's winning backhand lob. Bjorkman had a fourth break point at 1-5, netting a forehand. Henman wished that game with one of his five aces.

In the tie-break, Bjorkman had three set points from 6-3. Henman erased the first with forehand cross-court winner after a second serve which may have been long. A backhand volley took care of the second set point, and on the third Henman returned a second serve down the line with a splendid drive.

BY JOHN ROBERTS
in Dubai

Henman was unable to serve out his first match point, at 7-6, hitting a backhand long, but he returned a second serve to coax Bjorkman to hit a backhand wide for 9-7.

"I had the right tactical game, not to give him too many targets," Henman said. "It's not my normal game, but I still managed to play aggressively from the back."

Tonight Henman plays Jerome Golmard, who was chiefly responsible for his depression at the start of last season, defeating him in the first round of the Australian Open, a result Henman "put behind me" by beating Golmard in Tokyo. Yesterday the Frenchman, ranked No 61, took advantage of an indifferent performance by Karol Kucera, eliminating the No 5 seed, 7-6, 6-1.

Australia's Andrew Ilie followed his amazing first round win against Alex Corretja, the defending champion and world No 2, by dispatching Petr Korda, 6-1, 6-3 on his seventh match point. Ilie plays Gustavo Kuerten, the former French Open champion, in the quarter-finals.

Greg Rusedski's world ranking is under threat as the British No 2 ponders the wisdom of continuing to experiment with a new racket in Rotterdam and Battersea over the next two weeks after his embarrassing defeat by Francisco Clavet, of Spain, in the second round on Wednesday night. With just two wins to his name this year, Rusedski is

likely to cling to his place at No 10 next week only because Kucera, currently No 11, also failed to justify himself here. But Rusedski has 816 world ranking points to defend up to the end of March.

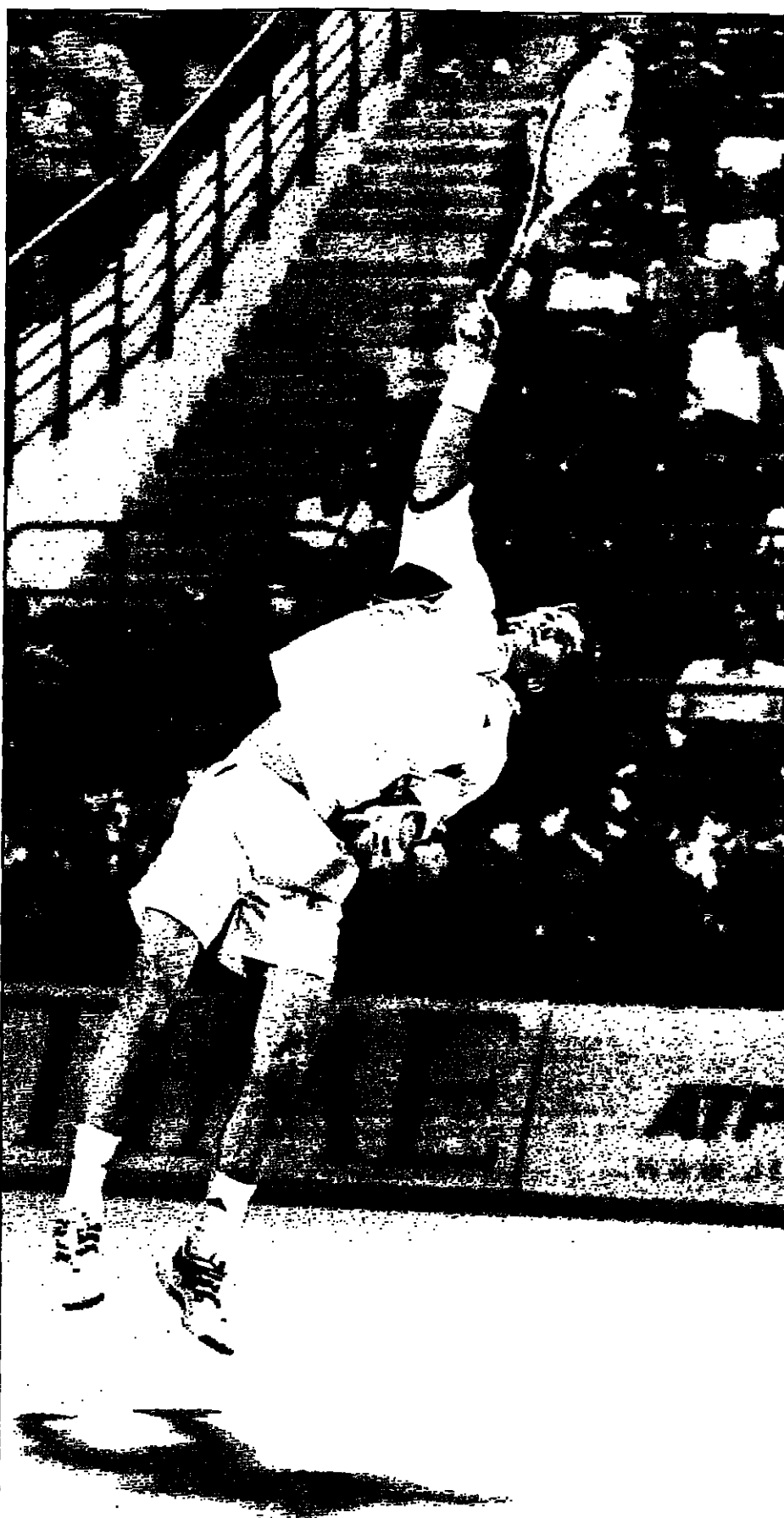
Having already lost his points from Split, Croatia, where he was the runner-up to Goran Ivanisovic a year ago this week, Rusedski goes to Rotterdam needing to make up the points he lost from his victory in Antwerp at the end of February last year.

Next month Rusedski will lose the points he gained from an appearance in the quarter-finals in Rotterdam last year, and then faces a major challenge in defending runner-up points from the ATP Tour Super 9 event in Indian Wells, California, where he was defeated by Marcelo Rios in last year's final.

Neither Rusedski's new wand nor the sight of Cinderella calling the lines inspired him to get to the ball on Wednesday night. Cinderella Al Drouby, a line judge from Syria, can wage a glass slipper to a pumpkin that some of her decisions will upset a player or two sooner or later, but so far she has thoroughly enjoyed her debut officiating at an ATP Tour event.

"My mother was reading the Cinderella story the night before I was born, and liked the name a lot," explained the 30-year-old Al Drouby, a former Fed Cup player.

Cinderella is accustomed to receiving quizzical looks. "Some people don't believe it is my real name, and I am always hearing jokes about it," she said. "But I like having an unusual name." She is not alone. Another linesman here is Merin.



Tim Henman serves on his way to victory over Jonas Bjorkman yesterday

Obscene Agassi defaulted

ON A tumultuous day at the Sybase Open in San Jose, California, Andre Agassi was defaulted, while Michael Chang advanced to the quarter-finals with a 6-4, 7-6 victory over the Argentinian Franco Squillari.

Agassi was defaulted after he swore three times in front of a linesman during his second-round match on Wednesday night against his American compatriot Cecil Mamiit. At the time Agassi was 5-0 down in a second set tie-break, having won the first set 6-0.

The linesman told the umpire, Steve Ulrich, that Agassi had uttered audible obscenities in his direction twice, but Agassi denied directing it at anyone but himself and said he deliberately kept his hand over his mouth to muffle his response to frustration with his poor play.

"I'm shocked," Agassi said. "I didn't swear at him and I can't believe it happened. I never made eye contact with him and I never said the word 'you'."

Earlier in the set, Agassi swore at Mamiit because his opponent caught one of his errant serves and did not give the ball to the ball-boy, but a linesman apparently failed to hear him.

Unable to close out the match against a former national collegiate champion, Agassi grew visibly upset in the tie-break and finally lost his cool, ending with a swearing fit.

"It was a bad decision on my part but it was done in the heat of battle," Agassi said. "By the same token it was a bad decision on the umpire and linesman's part. There's a need to keep things tight out there and I understand that but when there's not an apparent defacing of the game there's no reason to end the match that way. I was shocked. I wouldn't think in a million years how that would transpire."

Agassi, world No 7 and defending champion, will forfeit his prize-money and points from the event and could be fined up to \$20,000 (£12,500).

This was not the first time the sometimes temperamental American has been thrown out of an event. He was defaulted out of a tournament in Indianapolis in 1996 for swearing.

"I felt I was cheated," Mamiit said. "I was playing well. I wanted to find out the end result. I wanted to continue."

Chang will face the Norwegian Christian Ruud in the quarter-finals, who overcame the young American Paul Goldstein 6-1, 7-6.

Ruud, who unexpectedly beat world No 2 Alex Corretja at the Australian Open, said that his game has improved markedly since he took on a new coach, Thomas Hogstedt, and began practicing with leading Swedish players Thomas Enqvist and Jonas Bjorkman in Stockholm.

"They give me a lot more pace and when I used to practice in Norway, there wasn't anyone who could play at a top level," said Ruud, who at 66th is the highest-ranked Norwegian in history.

After battering Goldstein with heavy, deep groundstrokes, Ruud - who upset the fifth seed, Mariano Puerta, in the first round - said he could feel himself moving into good form and is looking forward to the French Open. "My goal is to reach the top 30 this year," he said. "If I do well the rest of the hardcourt season and reach the second week of Roland Garros, I have a good chance."

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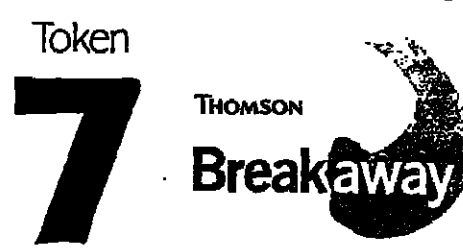
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Yates in trouble on and off the pitch

IF KEVIN YATES feels the whole world is against him just at the moment, he is not far wrong. The Bath prop, who is inconvenienced not so much by a cauliflower ear as a cauliflower reputation, now has the Rugby Football Union and London Scottish on his broad West Country back as well as Waspas, who have accused him of stamping on the face of their flanker, Paul Volley, during last weekend's Premiership match.

RUGBY UNION
By CHRIS HEWETT

scandal, which ended with a disciplinary tribunal convicting Yates of sinking his teeth into the left lobe of Simon Fenn, the Exiles flanker, during a Tetley's Bitter Cup tie. The tribunal ordered Yates to foot the entire bill and instructed him to pay the first £10,000 by the end of December, but London Scottish insist they have not received a penny.

The RFU have thrown their full weight behind London Scottish's campaign to recoup £20,000 in legal costs arising from last year's ear-biting

on the 26-year-old international until he puts his hand in his pocket. However, Yates, who sank thousands of pounds of his own money into an attempt to prove his innocence recently stated that he had been financially ruined by the affair and could not afford to pursue the High Court appeal he had originally planned.

To make matters worse, his current Bath contract expires at the end of the season; if he is found guilty of assaulting Volley - the RFU have not yet decided when this latest case will be heard - there is a strong likelihood that the Recreation

Ground management will wash their hands of him. That would leave him the option of pursuing a career in New Zealand provincial rugby, but any ban imposed in lieu of repayment to London Scottish might slam that door shut as well.

For the moment, at least, Bath are standing by their most troublesome offspring. "Until we know the facts of the Wasps business, we cannot condemn the guy," said Bob Calleja, the former European champions' general manager.

"We're in the realm of conjecture; we have to look at all the evidence rather than jump

to hasty conclusions. We're investigating the incident.

"Andy Robinson, our coach, will look at the video footage and discuss it with Kevin. If the case against him is proved, there will be repercussions.

"Unless and until that happens, we will support him as we would any other Bath player."

Meanwhile, news that the big-time professional clubs in England and France had agreed a common approach to the thorny question of next year's European Cup was greeted less than enthusiastically by Tom Kiernan, who chairs the organising committee of the current

tournament. Nevertheless, Kiernan agreed that the new blueprint, thought to propose a 20-team competition with six places reserved for both England and France, should be discussed by the board of European Rugby Cup Ltd.

The bargaining is certain to be of the hard variety, particularly as the English are not keen on any secondary European Shield-style competition, while the Celts and Italians are unlikely to dance with joy at the prospect of only eight places between four countries. The Welsh want all four so-called "super clubs" to be involved, even

though they themselves have identified only two of them, while the Irish would argue against a drop from three entrants to two, especially as they boast the reigning champions in Ulster.

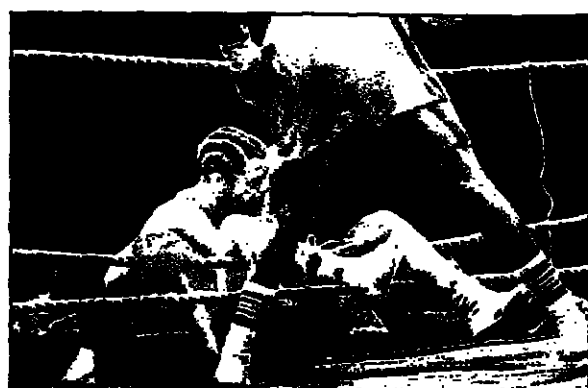
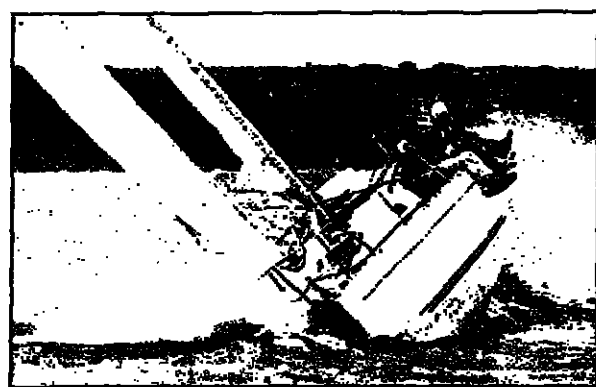
Andy Hindle, the West Hartlepool chairman, gave some legitimacy to the constant rumours that his club was about to negotiate a merger with Newcastle in the light of Sir John Hall's imminent off-loading of the Falcons. "The idea of a super-club here in the North-east is attractive," acknowledged Hindle yesterday. "It would have to be on a 50-50 basis - we won't be sacrificing our identity - but

we're at an embryonic stage. It's very early days.

It is not early days for the Welsh, though. Graham Henry's side face a must-win Five Nations confrontation with Ireland at Wembley on Saturday week and the coach left no one in any doubt as to the urgency of the situation by rushing two injured tight forwards, David Young and Craig Quinell, into a 24-man squad for the match. Both men missed the surprise defeat by Scotland six days ago. Young with a calf injury and Quinell with knee problems.

Wales squad, Digest, page 31

The gallery of photographs that won the *Independent's* Robert Hallam a major award



The photographs that won Robert Hallam an IOC Best of Sport award (clockwise from top left): Auditrac in the Sigma 33 class at Cowes Week; Vinnie Jones takes a break for Wimbledon v Liverpool last season; freestyle swimmer Sion Brinn; start of the London Triathlon at West India dock; welterweight Cam Raeside is knocked through the ropes in defeat by Gilbert Eastman; Lord Archer (right) and Ken Doherty celebrate the peer's appointment as president of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association; Rich Richardson dodges the ball as Suttonians CC wicketkeeper; Martina Hingis in Wimbledon semi-final defeat to Jana Novotna

Howey weighs up task ahead

FOR KATE HOWEY, the world middleweight champion, this weekend is as much a test of character as her fighting capabilities. The Tournoi de Paris is the toughest of the A tournaments in the world, with all the leading judo countries competing - Japan, Korea, Russia, as well as four French in every weight.

And Howey, who defends her title in October in Birmingham, has not won a top event for some time - a bronze last May in the European championships was her best result.

The problem has not been her fighting spirit (such a key element in judo), nor her tech-

JUDO
By PHILIP NICKSAN

nical ability, but something more prosaic - her weight. Shortly after she won the world title in 1997, in Paris, the International Judo Federation changed the weights, and middleweight went from 66kg to 70kg. The four kilograms has been crucial for Howey - a famously honed fighter.

She trained at 68kg and slimmed down to a mean 66kg for the event - and few could stand in her way. But, unlike most of the rest of the population of Britain, she cannot put on those extra four kilos. "I have

such a fast metabolism that it doesn't matter how much I eat - I just sweat it off," Howey, 25, said.

"And when I attack these girls, some of whom used to be 72kg players, who trained at 74kg or 75kg, I find it difficult to move them." Howey intends to take the traditional route of a heavy weights programme in March after the coming crop of events, but first she must battle through the Tournoi de Paris.

It will be important also for the former world lightweight champion Nicola Fairbrother, who needs to demonstrate to the new British chief coach Udo Quellmalz her continuing strengths against her younger

rival, the European silver medalist Debbie Allan.

Similarly, this is the case for the middleweight Ryan Birch, another former European champion facing a strong domestic challenge from the younger Winston Gordon. For the lightweight Danny Kingston, the first question is whether he will make the weight - which he failed to do last year. Only then can his unquestioned talents come into play.

ON THE STARTING LINE: Howey, Featherweight (66kg); J. Johnson, Featherweight (66kg); S. Moss, (67kg); D. Kingston, Light-middleweight (68kg); G. Randall, Light-middleweight (68kg); R. Birch, Middleweight (70kg); E. Summers, Featherweight (66kg); N. Fairbrother, Light-middleweight (68kg); C. Peel, Middleweight (70kg); K. Howey, Light-heavyweight (75kg); M. Rogers, Heavyweight (78kg); S. Callender.

Thunder's electrical boost

SUPER LEAGUE's northern and southern outposts are celebrating new backing that will help them compete with the clubs from the game's heartlands this season.

The new franchise on Tyne-side, the Gateshead Thunder, have unveiled a £500,000 sponsorship deal over three years with Northern Electric and Gas that is one of the biggest the game has ever seen.

The London Broncos will carry the logo of their major shareholders, the Virgin Group, on their jerseys for the first time, something that the club's chief executive, Tony Rea, said showed Virgin's "significantly increased commitment".

RUGBY LEAGUE
By DAVE HADFIELD

The Broncos have also enlisted Canterbury Clothing as the sponsors of a redesigned playing kit, which the chairman of Virgin, Richard Branson, called "a whole new look" for the team at yesterday's launch.

Northern Electric and Gas will have their name on the Thunder's home and away shirts and signing them up as backers is a significant achievement in a game that has not always found it easy to attract sponsors in recent years.

The other newcomers to Super League this season,

promoted Wakefield Trinity, show the extent of their rebuilding by including just one member of the side that won last year's First Division Grand Final in their line-up to face Batley in their Challenge Cup tie tonight.

Only the prop forward, Francis Stephenson, remains from the team that beat Featherstone last September. The other dozen are all making their competitive debuts for Trinity, including their scrum-half, Glen Tomlinson, who is playing his first match since breaking his leg playing for Hull 12 months ago.

"It will be a big occasion for Glen," said the Wakefield

coach, Andy Kelly. "The way he's recovered from his injury is an inspiration to others."

Shane Kenward, who broke his wrist in his one and only game for Salford last season, moves to stand-off, with the former Leeds player Tony Kemp, Wakefield's biggest signing, at loose-forward.

Bradford Bulls, who showed Wakefield what a leap in class they have to make by beating them 52-6 in a friendly last week, have signed a member of a famous rugby league clan, the 19-year-old prop forward, Vinny Myler, from the Simms Cross amateur club. Myler will play in the Bulls' Academy side this year.

England held back by crisis of confidence

Poor passing against France was a symptom of deeper problems the new coach must cure. By Glenn Moore

THOSE of us who were one of the scores of England fans who were in the stands at Wembley on Wednesday night, looking on as the team were defeated by France, will have seen a picture of a man who has been a part of the team's history. He sat, looking shell-shocked and asking in vain for a brandy, in Wembley Stadium's Red Room, a hospitality room off the main banqueting hall.

On the walls were photographs of famous Wembley scenes including that picture of Wolfgang Weber equalising for West Germany in 1966, a curious choice for a picture entitled "England win the World Cup".

The chances of a repeat success seemed as distant as ever following England's eclipse by France, the current world champions, a few hours earlier and Wilkinson knew it. He also had a fair idea why.

"We kept giving the ball away," he said. "We'd be defending, working hard, staying with people, staying on our feet, staying patient, getting the ball back and then thinking, 'Thank God, now let's...'. Oh Christ, we've got to do it again. We do it again, get it back, think 'here we go...'. Oh Christ, do it again. That was the pattern of the evening."

"I can see, in my mind right now, 15, 20, 25-yard passes where, 99 times out of 100, the player concerned would think: 'I've got three passing options, we've just got the ball back so let's play the simple one, get our shape back, keep the ball from them, and take it from there.' And then we gave it away for fun."

A sense of déjà vu filled the room. We had heard this before, in this same room, from Glenn Hoddle. What was it that made perfectly decent international footballers, who had the ability to hit an accurate 25-yard pass 50 times out of 50, into men with the pass selection and execution of a Sunday morning park player?

Wilkinson confessed that at half-time the only answer he had to the malaise was to tell his players not to do it. It would appear that the week's events, and the quality of the opposition, exacerbated the lack of confidence within the team to the extent that players often neither trusted themselves nor their team-mates to give or receive the ball. As a consequence France had a staggering 70 per cent of possession in the second period.

The whole team were affected. The goalkeeper, too, often hoofed the ball upfield, a 50-50 ball at best; the defence, while good defenders, are not collectively good at distribution; the forwards, when they saw the ball, did not hold it up. The biggest problem was in midfield with Jamie Redknapp and Paul Ince especially disappointing.

Compared to France's movement England were static. They also became increasingly stretched out raising further doubts about the ability of Alan Shearer and Michael Owen to work together. The situation cried out for a younger Peter Beardsley or Teddy Sheringham to link the play.

"The longer the game went on the longer the passing became and we missed that link between back and front," Wilkinson said. By the time Paul Scholes came on it was too late and he may not be the answer anyway. Matt Jansen, whose arrival transformed the under-21 game at Derby the previous night (the first half of which resembled the second half of the senior game), could be the solution but he is inexperienced and the need is urgent.



The England defender Tony Adams suffers in the face of Wednesday's 2-0 defeat against France. Empics

"We cannot look beyond the Poland game," said Wilkinson of the 27 March European Championship qualifier. "Our situation is akin to having to win the last three games of the season to stay in the division. Poland is the first one."

In the longer term Wilkinson, in his capacity as technical director, is building towards emulating the French system of coaching and development which led to their World Cup triumph last summer and, as Wembley saw, continues to reap reward. "They have developed an international team that is like a club team on and off the field," Wilkinson said. "It takes time."

In reference to the French reaction after they failed to reach the 1994 World Cup final (which was to meet Gérard Houllier to the post of technical director and promote his assistant, Aimé Jacquet, as coach), Wilkinson added: "Because of football's place in their culture they would not have been as disappointed nationally as we were which makes it easier to plan long-term. The result did not govern them, they saw it as part of a process."

"Look at the way they put Thierry Henry in the under-21s on Tuesday. There would be a right spirit here if someone was put back into the under-21s but they thought that was the

right thing for the whole picture."

When asked for the positives that could be drawn from the match, he paused for 25 seconds before answering: "We did not start off too badly in terms of possession but we got worse as the half went on. Then, when we were not getting the ball we stopped them getting behind us for about 20 minutes. After that you have to admit we were beaten by a better team."

Poland, who were held by Finland on Wednesday night, in a friendly played in Malta, was not anywhere near as good as the French. Nor will they be pushovers. They largely out-

played England at Wembley two years ago and they have a number of technically gifted players including the late-developing striker Miroslaw Trzcielak, who plays for Osasuna, in Spain.

"We've got the players to get a result against Poland," Wilkinson said. "I don't think tonight was typical of our ability. There are plenty of performances which have shown we are better than that."

If England are to prove it confidence must, however, be restored and Wilkinson added: "Tonight will not have done their confidence any good." Thus the clamour for Kevin Keegan.

Williams winning spree ended

SNOKER

MARK WILLIAMS' attempt to become the first player since Stephen Hendry in 1993 to defend his Benson and Hedges Masters title successfully ended yesterday.

He lost 6-4 to Alan McManus in the opening quarter-final, a loss that ended Williams' 16-match unbeaten record that had brought him the Irish and Welsh Open titles plus a team victory with Wales in the Nations Cup.

McManus, who has lost his last three games with Williams, including the second whitewash of his career at last month's Welsh Open, seemed assured of a place in the semi-finals as he potted his way to a 5-1 lead. Williams then showed plenty of spirit to win the next three frames.

In frame nine, McManus saw victory snatched away from him after building up a 58-13 lead. Unfortunately for him, he missed what would have been a match-clinching red and Williams knocked in a third consecutive half-century break to take the frame.

What proved to be the final frame was the longest of the match and ebbed and flowed before McManus delicately cut in the final pink and then added the black for his triumph.

Williams had no complaints after losing his title. "Alan played better than me on the day and deserved to beat me," he said. "But I tried my guts out when I was 5-1 down. It's pointless lying down like a big baby."

Duff is toast of winter warm-up

FEBRUARY HAS never been an ideal month for the home countries to play full internationals, which is why Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales all opted out of any engagement this week.

Bad weather, poor pitches and heavy club commitments tend to diminish the enthusiasm of players and supporters alike, leading to disappointing attendance by both.

On the other hand, managers are aware that international football's mid-winter break is already longer, at three or four months, than the traditional close season, and they can be desperate to bring their charges together again.

Inviting a second-rate Paraguay side to leave his summer at home for a frozen fixture in western Europe was hardly a recipe for excitement. Such is the continually astonishing spirit of football in the Republic of Ireland, however, that on a bitter Dublin night a crowd

of almost 28,000 turned out to watch their heroes at Lansdowne Road. Only one player (Steve Staunton) had pulled out of the full strength squad selected, while Mark Kinsella and Kenny Cunningham, rival captains in Monday night's Premiership game between Charlton and Wrexham, flew from London to join their team-mates on the training ground the following day.

A year ago, having been knocked out of the World Cup by Belgium in a play-off, not even the Irish bothered to arrange a February match. This time Mick McCarthy needed a meteorological sense for next month's important away game against Macedonia in a European Championship group in which four countries — those two plus Yugoslavia and Croatia — now share the lead with two wins apiece.

Against a Paraguay team just about strong enough to make for a meaningful contest, a 2-0 victory was probably the minimum requirement and that was duly achieved. If the goals, a penalty by Denis Irwin and a deflection off David Connolly's thigh, were scruffy, the Irish reaped enough benefits to make the whole exercise worthwhile.

Seventeen players had a run-out, without unduly affecting the team's essential cohesion and as long as there are no serious injuries, the squad for Macedonia will pick itself. A number of members, notably the whole midfield quartet of Jason McAteer, Roy Keane, Kinsella and Damien Duff, enhanced already burgeoning reputations with Blackburn's Duff emerging by general consent as man of the match.

Pundits like John Giles and Mark Lawrenson had identified the diffident young man as one



Duff: Ran at defenders

who needed a convincing international performance and "Duff" proved to be anything but.

"He was confident enough to run at players and beat them," McCarthy said. "I asked him and Jason how many good crosses they could get in."

"It certainly helps when you've got the same players together and I was pleased with their commitment to training and their attitude on the pitch. Perhaps that team [Paraguay] coming here two years ago might have given us problems."

Macedonia still might in a very different sort of game on 27 March, but the Irish will be all the better prepared.

Rovers as a run away from past misfortune

NON-LEAGUE NOTEBOOK

DONCASTER ROVERS play hosts to Yeovil tomorrow knowing that although they are blazing a trail in the Nationwide Conference, their visitors are the only side in the top five divisions in English football to be unbeaten away from home this season.

Rovers' much-publicised descent to near oblivion seems to be over, and the torrid recent past should finally be laid to rest next week when Ken Richardson, the former owner, is due to be sentenced for conspiring to burn down the inaptly named Belle Vue stadium in 1995.

"It's taken some time, given the circumstances we inherited, but we've made a start," Ian McMahon, the club's chief executive, said yesterday. "We're unbeaten in six games now, and have won the last three, including away games at Rushden & Diamonds and Kettering."

Likely to be in the Rovers starting line-up is the Spanish defender Ignacio Ybarra, once of Real Zaragoza and now on a month-to-month contract.

Other new faces may be joining him soon, as the manager, Ian Snodin, has been given the go-ahead to target players in the English and Scottish leagues. "We only want players who are better than those we already have," McMahon said. "We are looking."

Elsewhere in the Conference, the leaders, Kettering, host Telford knowing that their teenage striker, Ben Wright, is unlikely to be with them much longer. After recent trials with Bolton, Preston and Leeds, a spokesman said: "I think it's a matter of when he goes now, rather than if." In anticipation of Wright's departure, the club have signed on loan the 30-year-old Burnley striker, Philip Eastwood, with a view to the move being made permanent.

One of the weekend's key ties will see the Conference favourites, Cheltenham, play

at Morecambe. Although second in the table, Cheltenham are just a point behind the leaders and have three games in hand. They will be heartened by the decision this week of their manager, Steve Cotterill, to stay at Whaddon Road rather than move to the Second Division club, Wycombe Wanderers, who asked him to become assistant to his former Wimbledon team-mate Lawrie Sanchez.

"I would love to complete what I've started with Cheltenham and I owe it to the chairman, directors, supporters and players to stay," Cotterill said.

Among those likely to be facing Cheltenham tomorrow will be Morecambe's Japanese utility player Kieseke Takano, who is not only believed to be the first man from his country to have played football in an English national league, but who also has his own Appreciation Society, formed by around 80 Lancaster University students attracted to the club by a discount tickets scheme.

Hat-trick no worry for Maier

SKIING

HERMANN MAIER believes he can complete his hat-trick of World Championship gold medals in today's giant slalom. Switzerland's Erika Hess won three at the 1982 Schladming championships but nobody has repeated the feat.

Maier, the newly crowned super-giant slalom and downhill world champion, is also the Olympic giant slalom champion and overwhelming favourite.

But he said yesterday he will need two near-perfect runs to have a chance. "If I make mistakes then there are enough others who can win," he said. The Swiss defending champion, Michael Von Grünigen, Italy's Patrick Holzer, Stephan Eberharter and the Austrian newcomer, Benjamin Raich pose the main threat.

"For me it was important to win gold in the opening super-G. That took the pressure off." Maier said. "After two golds you forget about race tactics."

SPORTING DIGEST

BASKETBALL

NBA: Cleveland 87, Orlando 89; New York 81, New York 101; Washington 83, Los Angeles 92; Sacramento 82, Los Angeles 103; Denver 99, Seattle 89; Dallas 92, Portland 111; Indiana 92, Milwaukee 105; LA Clippers 93.

WNBA: Sacramento 78, Phoenix 80; Los Angeles 78, Phoenix 80; Seattle 78, Phoenix 80; Portland 78, Phoenix 80; Dallas 78, Phoenix 80; San Antonio 78, Phoenix 80; Houston 78, Phoenix 80; Phoenix 78, Phoenix 80.

CRICKET

Hampshire's veteran pace bowler, Cardigan Connor, has been forced to retire from first-class cricket because of a long-term knee injury. The 37-year-old Anglian took 1,019 wickets in all competitions for the county. Sussex have signed Bas Zuercher, the 21-year-old Netherlands international, on a one-year contract.

TOUR MATCH (Netherlands, India) Farnham 247, Ind 114; Ind 25, N 109; Ind 25, N 109; Ind 25, N 109.

CYCLING

MALLORCA TOUR FIVE and final stage (141.7km, Mallorca) (1st stage) 1. S. Basso, 2. S. Basso, 3. S. Basso, 4. S. Basso, 5. S. Basso, 6. S. Basso, 7. S. Basso, 8. S. Basso, 9. S. Basso, 10. S. Basso, 11. S. Basso, 12. S. Basso, 13. S. Basso, 14. S. Basso, 15. S. Basso, 16. S. Basso, 17. S. Basso, 18. S. Basso, 19. S. Basso, 20. S. Basso, 21. S. Basso, 22. S. Basso, 23. S. Basso, 24. S. Basso, 25. S. Basso, 26. S. Basso, 27. S. Basso, 28. S. Basso, 29. S. Basso, 30. S. Basso, 31. S. Basso, 32. S. Basso, 33. S. Basso, 34. S. Basso, 35. S. Basso, 36. S. Basso, 37. S. Basso, 38. S. Basso, 39. S. Basso, 40. S. Basso, 41. S. Basso, 42. S. Basso, 43. S. Basso, 44. S. Basso, 45. S. Basso, 46. S. Basso, 47. S. Basso, 48. S. Basso, 49. S. Basso, 50. S. Basso, 51. S. Basso, 52. S. Basso, 53. S. Basso, 54. S. Basso, 55. S. Basso, 56. S. Basso, 57. S. Basso, 58. S. Basso, 59. S. Basso, 60. S. Basso, 61. S. Basso, 62. S. Basso, 63. S. Basso, 64. S. Basso, 65. S. Basso, 66. S. Basso, 67. S. Basso, 68. 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SPORT

HENMAN'S DESERT MARCH P27 • WELLS THIRSTY FOR SUCCESS P26

The England succession: Rumours point the way to Fulham as the bookies' favourite tries to quell speculation

Reluctant
Keegan is
in demand

HAVING BRIEFLY paused for some football to interrupt its spinning, the game's rumour mill picked up speed again yesterday as England's 2-0 home defeat by France on Wednesday night was consigned to history. The caretaker reign of Howard Wilkinson is likely to follow, possibly within days, with Kevin Keegan emerging as the latest favoured candidate.

Keegan promptly reiterated his desire to remain at Fulham but neither the bookies, most of whom have suspended betting, nor many pundits were convinced. Given Fulham's immediate commitments he could say little else and he is also one of those candidates Football Association officials have in mind when they note that most people who declare themselves disinterested have never had their resolve tested. "It can be a different matter when your country calls you," said an official who may be just that this weekend.

With Alex Ferguson now regarded as having genuinely ruled himself out of the running the main alternative to Keegan appears to be Bryan Robson but the Middlesbrough manager is among the few actually to have turned England down - in 1996 before the FA approached Glenn Hoddle. Many fans at Wembley on Wednesday wanted Terry Venables but his prospects are limited by opposition within the FA while Roy Hodgson's reputation was marred by his failure at Blackburn.

Bobby Robson remains one of the strongest contenders but his age is against him, especially with an FA keen to be seen as forward-looking. Wilkinson, while yet to withdraw formally, seemed far less enthusiastic about the job in the

BY GLENN MOORE
Football Correspondent

wake of the defeat and is likely to return to the role of technical director.

Keegan would certainly captivate the country and he would instil confidence in an England team currently bereft of it. Longer term there should be concern about his tactical sophistication, his ability to deal with pressure - which was put in doubt by the famous "I would love it" Sky TV interview - and his relationship with the media which is nowhere near as good as his image suggests. His lucrative deal with the Sun would have to go, otherwise he would have the rest of the tabloids ranged against him from the start.

The immediate problem with Keegan is timing. Fulham are chasing promotion from the Second Division and have a fifth-round FA Cup tie against Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday. One floated possibility is that Keegan, who has 18 months remaining on his contract, would do the jobs part-time until the season's end.

Yesterday Keegan did his best to quell speculation with an emphatic denial. "I'm staying at Fulham. There is no way I will leave. Whoever becomes England coach good luck to him, and I really mean that, but it will not be me."

"Mr Al Fayed gave me a budget of millions and the freedom of the club and that means more to me than the England job. That's hard to say but true. I've committed myself to Fulham and I've got a great staff here. The timing's just not right."

That is that then. Only it is not. If Fulham lose on Sunday do not rule out an announcement on Monday. The FA is anxious to make a swift appointment ahead of the crucial European Championship qualifier against Poland on 27 March and may approach Keegan ahead of the Old Trafford tie.

Geoff Thompson, the acting chairman of the FA, said yesterday that the choice had been narrowed down "to a reasonably short list" and an appointment was "very close". However, he added: "I doubt if someone will be appointed next week."

The man in temporary possession, Wilkinson, stressed: "Something needs to be done quickly. The Poland match is a big game and whoever is dealing with it will need at least three weeks to get to grips with the problems we'll encounter to give himself a chance."

Wilkinson will meet Noel White, the chairman of the international committee, in north London today. He is expected to rule himself out of the running for the permanent position and give his view on who should be chosen. As Wilkinson would revert to technical director it is important that the two get on.

Wilkinson said he had not had time to consider his own future explaining: "The weekend before last I was on the phone dealing with an under-18 game in Wycombe, who would be available and so on. On the Tuesday all that changes and wallow."

France's performance underlined the value of continuity in management. Roger Lemerre, like Aimé Jacquet before him, having stepped up from the national coaching

Kevin Keegan, the subject of growing England rumours, reaffirms his loyalty to Fulham yesterday **Allsport**

staff. Wilkinson said two years ago, when he became technical director, that Hoddle's successor should be appointed then. Hoddle's preference for having his buddies around him made that impossible then and, to judge from the way the

selection process is going, it will not happen now either.

Wilkinson appeared to accept this when he suggested this was not the time to establish that structure as "you can't look beyond the Poland game, it is a crucial game and it would

be daft to consider it as dispensable."

On that basis the FA could appoint Keegan in a part-time role simply to buy time with a victory, or ask Wilkinson to remain caretaker. A considered decision could then be made on

the management structure while Wilkinson reverts to his original job, which is as important a post as that of national coach. In the mean time the rumour mill continues to turn. England's lack of confidence, page 31

Punters
make
their
choice

BY IAN DAVIES

MONEY TALKS and yesterday it was screaming: "Kevin Keegan will be the next England manager". William Hill, Ladbrokes and the Tote all suspended betting on who would be the next permanent England boss yesterday afternoon after a massive Keegan gamble gathered pace during the morning.

William Hill laid bets about Keegan at all prices from 3-1 down to 4-6 - including a bet of £500 at 2-1 and a host of other three-figure wagers - before calling it a day.

Graham Sharpe, William Hill's spokesman said: "Kevin Keegan can say he won't be taking the England job until he is red, white and blue in the face. Our punters don't believe him. The last time we saw a rum like this on a managerial position was just before Terry Venables was appointed."

Coral, the only firm still betting on the contest by mid-afternoon, also took bets for Keegan, laying him at 9-2 and then 3-1 early on, before swiftly slashing his odds to even-money and then 8-11 a few minutes later.

But then the firm reported an attempted coup on David Platt, which seemed to originate from a group of central London black cab drivers, who descended on Coral shops en masse, backing the short-lived Sampdoria boss from 8-1 to 11-8 favourite while Keegan eased to 13-8.

Ladbrokes, who quoted Keegan at 9-2 first thing in the morning, were also inundated with inquiries for the Fulham chief operating operator and, after cutting him to 3-1, suspended betting. The Tote called a halt at 11.45am after laying Keegan at 8-11. Sean Boyce, Ladbrokes' spokesman said: "All the right people, the 'facs' [notoriously shrewd punters], have been wanting to back Keegan. We decided to pull the plug because the rumours circulating suggest an announcement could be imminent."

Houllier dismisses
talk of Zidane move

BY TOMMY STANFORTH

GERARD HOULLIER has dismissed speculation linking him with the World Footballer of the Year, Zinedine Zidane.

The Liverpool manager saw the Juventus midfielder help France to a 2-0 win over England at Wembley and was immediately linked with a £15m move. But Houllier, who helped launch Zidane's international career, believes there is no chance of securing the player's services as Juve seek to build their side.

"Everybody would like to have Zidane in their team," he said. "But we have to be realistic. He is still under contract at Juventus and I can't see why they would wish to lose their best player when they are trying to build a new team."

The veteran French international Franck Sauze has signed an 18-month contract with Bihennan. The 33-year-old Montpellier midfielder, capped 39 times for his country, has had spells at Sochaux, Atalanta and

Marselles, with whom he won the European Cup in 1993.

Middlesbrough's Danish international striker, Mikkel Beck, has rebuffed claims that he cheated when Dominic Matteo, the Liverpool defender, was sent off for a tackle on Beck during Boro's 3-1 defeat at Arsenal on Saturday.

Beck was upset when Andy Gray, the television pundit, accused him of diving. "Why should I dive? I was through on goal and I would have scored," Beck said. "I don't want to get players sent off. I want to score."

Mark Hughes, the Southampton striker, has been given a two-match suspension after becoming the first player to incur 14 yellow cards during the current campaign. Hughes was also fined £2,000, and a warned that further punishment would follow if he reached 17 bookings before the end of the season.

Rob Lee hinted yesterday that he may soon be on the way out of St James' Park. The Newcastle captain has only just returned to training after an Achilles injury and has been the subject of transfer speculation.

"Of course I want to stay at Newcastle but, sometimes, you don't always get what you want," Lee said. "You can never tell whether you're in a manager's plans or not. We have had disagreements but we'll just wait and see."

Sheffield United's runaway Greek player, Vas Borkobis, returned to Bramall Lane yesterday to hold clear-the-air talks with his manager, Steve Bruce. Borkobis went home to Greece last week claiming he needed rest to clear up an injury.

Bristol Rovers have agreed a new five-year contract with their player-manager, Ian Holloway, in addition to the 17 months still to run on the 35-year-old's existing deal.

HALLAM WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

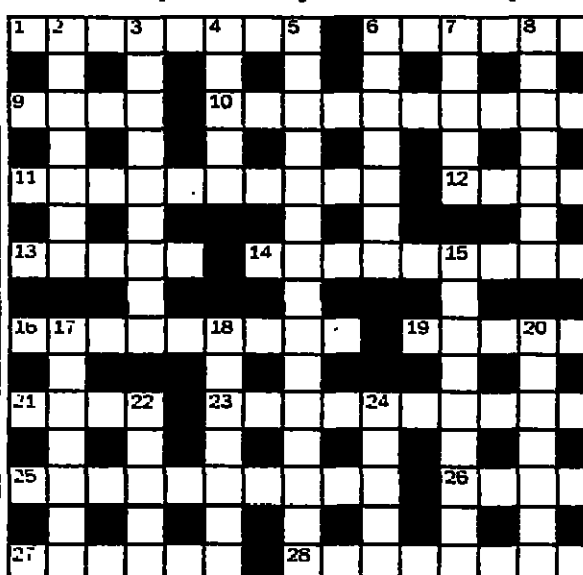
Robert Hallam has continued the *Independent's* tradition of prize-winning sports photography by winning one of the main awards in the International Olympic Committee's Best of Sport competition. Hallam, 38, who has worked for the *Independent* and *Independent on Sunday* for 10 years, was awarded the portfolio prize for colour photography. The competition drew entries from 30 countries and 180 specialist sports photographers, whose pictures were judged on technical quality, artistry and sporting symbolism. Hallam's winning portfolio appears on page 30.



THE FRIDAY CROSSWORD

No.3844 Friday 12 February

by Mass



- ACROSS**
- Collected set pieces (8)
 - Tyrite to revamp on piano (6)
 - Pack-animal's short rough sound (4)
 - Coach almost crashed, slicing into hill (10)
 - Untidy plot neglected round lake (10)
 - Recover from scrape (4)
 - Boss needs year for project (3)
 - Arrange for sides to meet (9)
 - Coat keeps flapping during climb (9)
 - Bed absorbing river's impurities (5)
 - Put out, having objections rebuffed (4)
 - Like the subject of an identity crisis? (10)
- DOWN**
- This biscuit's best, or hard crackers (10)
 - Patch peeled back showing discharge (4)
 - Support HM's persistent racehorse (8)
 - Review is first in eminent paper (8)
 - Unionist in work advanced, becoming well-off (7)
 - Bird with component crest (9)
 - Launch a band (5)
 - Not an effect in a conjurer's repertoire? (15)
 - I had ring inlaid in bold semiprecious stone (7)
 - Decorates fifty cards (5)
 - Turns out woman's penning short book (7)

Thursday's solution

SANDPAPER FANG
E A T I U G D A
A L D E R E M S I O I E R
S I T I E I O R
C O R S I C A C U G G E L S
A L E O F S U
P I C K E D O N T I O N S
E O E R E
P S L A O G N
R O C K I E S A S T O U N D
S I T I O D H A
G R O S S B E A R I N T R O
U B E N A N H A
T A S K D E N I G R A T E

- Region inhabited by prodigal Eastern bird (9)
- Brood over alien implement (7)
- Drop off one end of stage boards (7)
- Forms friendships after Sunday excursions (7)
- Name car in window (5)
- Insect, say, joining cloudy rising (5)

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Renewing your home insurance in February or March

It's not a trick. I am doing this to prepare you because this is an article on boy wonders. This is traumatic for all concerned. It is tricky for the boys, because they believe themselves to be men. It is tricky for me, because I find myself talking about "young people" and acting as if I am 72. And it is tricky for you, reader, because you will have in mind an age by which you should have accomplished something important in life.

Suspend such thoughts for a moment, or you may find yourself mired in resentment before too many other paragraphs are read. The topic is a minefield. "When I left university I felt as if I could do anything," said one thirtysomething. "But it was only arrogance and intellectual expansionism." He doesn't like boy wonders but I'm not sure if that's because he can no longer be one. Others talk mistily of past specimens. Winston Churchill, perhaps. Or William Pitt the Younger. It could be, however, that in the late 18th century it was simply easier to peak early. The modern one whom everyone mentions is William Hague, but he doesn't count because he always appears to be on the verge of becoming a grandad. But I am looking for boys/men (25 or under) who are in charge of something and have influence on someone who is not a blood relative.

This takes me to a place called Winton House, just off Piccadilly. The idea is to create a hub of social entrepreneurship and to fill the building with progressive-type companies, think-tanks, coffee shops with sofas, etc. They are already some way to this goal. I

Age is a rather tricky topic. First there is the problem of remembering your own. I find this quite a challenge at times. Nor am I the only one. In fact, after a certain age, some people seem genuinely puzzled when asked how old they are. "Hmum," they say, brows furrowed. This means they are in denial. But it's time to strip away all of that now because, before reading on, you need to remember how old you really are. You are probably wondering whether this is a trick. It is not. I am doing this to prepare you because this is an article on boy wonders. This is traumatic for all concerned. It is tricky for the boys, because they believe themselves to be men. It is tricky for me, because I find myself talking about "young people" and acting as if I am 72. And it is tricky for you, reader, because you will have in mind an age by which you should have accomplished something important in life. Suspend such thoughts for a moment, or you may find yourself mired in resentment before too many other paragraphs are read. The topic is a minefield. "When I left university I felt as if I could do anything," said one thirtysomething. "But it was only arrogance and intellectual expansionism." He doesn't like boy wonders but I'm not sure if that's because he can no longer be one. Others talk mistily of past specimens. Winston Churchill, perhaps. Or William Pitt the Younger. It could be, however, that in the late 18th century it was simply easier to peak early. The modern one whom everyone mentions is William Hague, but he doesn't count because he always appears to be on the verge of becoming a grandad. But I am looking for boys/men (25 or under) who are in charge of something and have influence on someone who is not a blood relative. This takes me to a place called Winton House, just off Piccadilly. The idea is to create a hub of social entrepreneurship and to fill the building with progressive-type companies, think-tanks, coffee shops with sofas, etc. They are already some way to this goal. I

walk up the stairs to the second floor. There is a T-junction. Whichever way I turn, I will find a boy wonder. To the left is the Foreign Policy Centre, headed by 24-year-old Mark Leonard (below left). To the right are the open-plan offices of Demos. Its former director, Geoff Mulgan, is part of the No 10 policy unit. Now the Demos board has decided to skip a generation by choosing 25-year-old Tom Bentley (below right) as the new director. Tom Bentley turns out to be fit and rather quiet. Ian Hargreaves, who is chairman of the Demos board, says that he has a maturity of manner, and this is true. But, mature or not, he is not too keen on the age stuff. "Look, I really don't think Demos has skipped a generation. Geoff is not ancient. He's 37. I don't see it in those terms."

So many of us here are in our twenties," he says that Demos has 15 staff and 10 or 11 of those are under 30. And he's in charge of it all. Not bad for a guy who, not that long ago, was the denim specialist at Gap on Regent Street. "That was my alternative career path," he says. Hardy. Tom Bentley got 10 GCSEs, grade A, and three A-grade A-levels. He says that he was surprised by both achievements, as he has been by subsequent ones, including getting the Demos job. He doesn't like the idea that some people think they automatically deserve things. He grew up in the East End, where his mother was a schoolteacher and his father a vicar. He was middle class but most of his fellow pupils were not. His parents made sure he had lots of other interests, and this is crucial to the way he thinks now. He is fully aware that former classmates who were just as bright have ended up as housewives, bank clerks, or in prison. He did not take a year out - "I wanted to get on with it" - and so, at 18, found himself at Oxford where he studied politics,

philosophy and economics. He left with a 2.1. I say that lots of people spend their university years getting drunk and then just go on to make money. "Yes, and they become corporate lawyers. I'm not interested in that. I like this work. I love the ideas." He started to work (unpaid) at Demos and (paid) at Gap. He left retailing soon enough. Specialist areas include social exclusion, the future, work and education. He became a part-time adviser to the Education Secretary, David Blunkett. Tom Bentley believes that the conventional classroom is outdated and that we need to concentrate less on institutions per se and more on the links between schools and society. His book, *Learning Beyond the Classroom*, was published last year. So what do his friends think of his new job?

"They think it's strange... But really it's just a development of the work, experience and ideas that I had at university. It's about the way that societies change." Has he always been this serious? "No! Well, I've always had a serious strand. When I went to university I had this naive question, the way that 18-year-olds do, about wanting to understand how societies change and develop." And what are his goals? "To change the world, but if you quoted that it would sound really cheesy. And to have an interesting life." I walk down the hall. The Foreign Policy Centre is so new that there is no furniture. It smells of new carpet. Mark Leonard breaks off talking on his mobile to give me a tour. He has dark, floppy hair and talks with his hands. I view the rooms but see only carpet (blue) and boxes (numerous). I mention boy wonder and he groans, hands on face. He wants to be known for his work and not for his age. I laugh at this, which is rude, and so listen when he says that he has been doing paid work since the age of 16. "I have seven years' experience doing a lot of things." This in-

cludes a gap year spent at Westminster as a researcher. He grew up partly in Brussels and speaks fluent French and German. He went to Cambridge and got a 2.2. He applied for five jobs when he left university and all but one said yes. "Only the FT said no," he says. He worked as a trainee journalist at *The Economist* for two months but found it limiting. "I was working with people who were obsessed with politics. They spent their whole life writing about it, talking about it, gossiping about it. But they wouldn't dream of getting involved in running anything. My dream in life is to do work on policy areas that matter to me and hopefully be in a position where my ideas will seep through to the people who are in power." This means that, in his early twenties, Mark Leonard was already pretty much living a dream. He went to Demos and became known as Mr Cool Britannia after writing a paper on rebranding Britain. He cringes when I say the name, hands on his face again. "That phrase appeared once, on page 13 or something." I doubt that this bothers him. It has done him no harm. The Foreign Policy Centre is independent but is clearly going to be listened to by the Government. Its patron is Tony Blair; its president Robin Cook. Mark Leonard says that the centre is desperately needed because no one is thinking about foreign policy in a "joined-up" way. His staff will be organised not by geography but by ideas. He is applying tests normally applied to domestic policy, to foreign ones. He is enthusiastic to the point of burling, though it could be jet-lag. He has just been in Canada to observe a massive public consultation exercise on the United Nations. As I leave, I cannot quite get over the fact that both of these boys/men grew up in the Seventies. "Actually, I don't remember the Seventies that well," says Mark Leonard. I note that their combined ages are 49. I try to remember my own age and my brow furrows. Boy wonders do that to you.

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INSIDE	Letters	2	Design	9	Music	12-14
	Leaders and comment	3-5	Architecture	9	Listings	15-16
	Obituaries	6-7	Science	10	Radio & Satellite TV	17
	Features	8	Arts	11	Today's TV	18
					SCIENCE	

Hitting the poor

Sir: I was disappointed to see that you had accepted the Government's spin on the Welfare Reform and Pensions Bill ("Ministers to take harsh line on single mothers", 10 February).

The Government has been keen to hype up its new Single Gateway procedures, while ignoring the benefit cuts proposed in the Bill. These will affect up to 100,000 claimants per year, and eventually cut over £1bn off benefits.

Widows, sick and disabled people will all lose out. Women are disproportionately affected. More and more people will be forced onto means-tested benefits. Poverty will increase. The gap between the rich and the poor will widen.

Meanwhile, many sick and disabled people desperately want to work. But the main barrier is often employers who fear the employment costs. There is no point in wasting money on interviews for non-existent jobs. Better to spend it on full subsidies for special equipment like large-screen or voice-activated computers for the visually impaired, or to provide flexible arrangements for people with intermittent conditions such as MS, or some mental illnesses.

DAVID RENDEL MP
Liberal Democrat Social Security Spokesperson
House of Commons
London SW1

Sir: So, the Court of Appeal has decided that the privatised electricity industry should return £1.5bn that it took in the view of the court, illegally from the employees' pension fund (report, 11 February). This provides an illuminating insight into Britain in the late 20th century.

The Tory government asked Middle England if it would like some cheap shares in an important monopoly. Middle England responded enthusiastically, and the privatisation went ahead.

Once the new companies had come into being, they took money which, in the view of the Court of Appeal, they had no right to, and used it to make people redundant.

As these hapless souls joined the unemployed, and the same Middle Englanders who had benefited from the initial privatisation, and who had received increased dividends as a direct result of the companies' actions, began to clamour that their precious taxes should not be spent supporting "the feckless work-shy unemployed", and pressed for cut in the social security payments - and got them. This process is called "the free market".

Hello Tony, are you listening?
RSP JENKINS
London W2

Sir: So now I know. It's official. I am a scrounging, lazy, layabout, living a life of luxury on state handouts. A secker after something for nothing.

At 65, my wife and I have a joint total of near 90 years contributing tax, insurance and other state dues and demands. I served Queen and country for five years in the RAF, my wife 20 years in the caring professions.

We raised two foster children with little financial help from the state and at considerable expense to ourselves, saving the taxpayer hundreds of thousands of pounds. We helped care for two elderly relatives over some 15 years.

At 50, I found myself unemployed and unemployable due to age discrimination. Not deterred, we invested our capital and a large part of the value of our house in a business. Twelve months later I was hit by an incurable and disabling illness and we lost £40,000 at least. I have not worked since.

My income? £75 per week.
DAVID BRYAN
Shipley,
West Yorkshire

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



Winter in Moscow No 5: A construction worker heads for home at the end of the day

Andy Johnstone

Sir: "Encourage" lone parents back into work? Surely "coerce", "bully", or even "terrorise" are far more appropriate.

Until the Social Security system is reformed from the inside out there will be no such thing as "encouraging" people back into work. The low morale and cynicism that exists among frontline DSS staff provokes an attitude of "them" against "us" between claimants and staff, making the process of signing on feel more like a Gestapo interrogation than any act of "encouragement".

DAVID ROSE
London WC1

Cancel those debts

Sir: Serious economists, as well as pop stars (report, 11 February), have supported Jubilee 2000, and urged the cancellation of Third World debt. At the Adam Smith Institute, we have expressed the view that this debt burden is holding back development. These were often ill-considered loans lent by ill-advised banks to illegitimate governments. The capital is gone, in most cases wasted, and repayment comes from what little income these countries generate.

By cancelling that debt on a one-off basis, we not only raise the living standards of the desperately poor, but we give them the chance, and the investment, to embark on that upward path which generates growth, wealth and jobs.

Cancellation is our interest as well as theirs.
ALEX SINGLETON
Senior Research Economist
Adam Smith Institute
London SW1

Rein-in Spain

Sir: David Prescott's and J J Putnam's letters (6 February) prompt me to suggest the system used in Spain as a possible solution to the problem of car

speeds. I have just returned from the Costa del Sol, where I drove, more than 1,500 miles in a few weeks, mostly along the Antovia del Mediterraneo, where the road still passes through many towns and villages.

A warning notice advises that the traffic lights will operate if a vehicle is travelling faster than the speed limit. The speed limit varies from 20kph to 50 or 60 and overhead traffic lights with eye-level repeaters flash amber in the manner of our railway level-crossing gates. If a vehicle is going too fast, the lights change to red. There is ample warning for following vehicles and presumably the system operates in a similar manner to our speed cameras.

This seems to be a very effective system and is worthy of consideration in the UK.

Incidentally, whilst I drove very little in the big cities, I found the standard of driving rather better than in the UK, apart from the two-wheeled motorbikes which buzz around, making town centres noisy and fume-laden.
JOHN TIERNEY
Carlisle

Sir: The assertion that humans do not hunt and kill species closely related to us in the way that chimpanzees hunt colobus monkeys (letter, 10 February) is belied by the recent story that HIV probably crossed to humans from eating infected chimpanzee meat. We are a lot more closely related to chimps than they are to colobus.

ANDREW COSGROVE
Clare College, Cambridge

Sir: Your obituary of Dame Iris Murdoch (10 February) was illustrated by the portrait of her by Tom Phillips RA. Phillips includes a sprig of the ginkgo biloba tree in the foreground, beyond which Dame Iris gazes calmly into

Don't blame GPs

Sir: Your report (10 February) about the rise in NHS waiting lists implies that one of the reasons for the increase was that GP surgeries closed over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Not only did this not happen - it could not happen. GP surgeries may not have been running routinely over the holiday period, but all GPs are required by their terms of service to provide a 24-hour service for their patients. They do this either themselves or in association with other doctors, through neighbouring practices, co-operatives or deputising services. Quite simply, GPs are not allowed to close.

To blame GPs for the rise in waiting lists, it would be necessary to show that patients were being inappropriately admitted to hospital beds, preventing routine admissions. There has been no suggestion that the patients occupying hospital beds at this time were any less ill or less deserving of hospital treatment.

GPs were also criticised for adding to the workload of casualty departments over the holiday period. This too is a mistaken

assumption. A health service that is asked to run at maximum capacity the whole year round will always have difficulties at times of increased demand. It is a testament to all those who work in the NHS that these problems were kept to a minimum.
HAMISH MELDRUM
BMA General Practice Committee
London E14

Women's choice

Sir: I was intrigued by the observation of 15-year-old Caroline Abomeli upon entering the field of journalism to find no women editors ("The next generation will be feminists in all but name", 6 February).

As a newspaper editor, I have often wondered why we have few women editors. It is easy to write it off as an old fraternity of white men holding fast to power. The truth is much more hidden. I have known at least three powerful women writers who could have ascended to a key editing position. Each opted out of the newspaper hierarchy. Two returned as part-time writers, and the third has become a part-time university professor. All stepped

off the newsmagazine career track for the mommy track. Each is married to a professional.

None of my fellow males had this option; thus, we did not consider it.

It is an interesting dilemma for those who can afford it. I wish I had the same option.

It is not necessarily a bad thing when there are no women managers in a chosen field. They have chosen a better life for themselves and their families. And it is not a choice most men have the opportunity to weigh.
MIKE SIROKY
Bremen, Indiana, USA

Citizen Leka

Sir: Would you allow me to reply to Daniel Cooke's emotional defence of Mr Leka Zogu, the South Albanian resident who claims to be king of Albania (letter, 10 February)?

Firstly, Albania is constituted as a republic and recognised as such by the entire world. It therefore has no king, whether that suits Mr Cooke or not. Secondly, the Albanians recently held a referendum in which they clearly rejected reintroducing the monarchy. Thirdly, Mr Zogu's father became King Zog only by overthrowing an elected government, declaring that the republic was a kingdom and putting himself on its throne. Fourthly, Mr Zogu himself has never been king and has never even lived in Albania. Fifthly, diplomatic immunity for the Zogu family would do nothing to alleviate the dreadful suffering of Albanian people in Albania and Kosovo.

Most importantly of all, neither Mr Zogu nor anyone else can claim diplomatic immunity on the sole grounds that his father was once king of somewhere. Nor can one claim immunity, as Mr Cooke appears to believe, on the grounds that one has been kind to Mr Cooke.

D BISHOP
Brussels

for best actress does indeed give the lie to recent pessimism about the British film industry. What a pity it doesn't put a stop to the unthinking condemnation of Lottery-financed films (leading article, 10 February).

The Lottery was a major contributor to Hilary and Jackie. Other successes for Lottery-financed films include awards from the Cannes Film Festival, Evening Standard British Film Awards and the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

CAROLYN LAMBERT
Director of Lottery Film
Arts Council of England
London SW1

IN BRIEF

the distance. The ginkgo is the oldest living tree, being known from fossil records. It has long been used by the Chinese as a herbal remedy for memory and is the subject of extensive international research as a treatment for Alzheimer's disease. A remarkably coincidence that adds a poignant resonance to this portrait.

HARRY CAYTON
Executive Director
Alzheimer's Disease Society
London SW1

Sir: The Academy Award nomination of Emily Watson



MILES KINGTON

They enrol in the autumn of their life and spend three years learning how to award Oscars

ed to make great personal statements in film, which is why European films don't make money.

There is a course at the Academy (motto: "A movie is only a movie, but special effects are special") which teaches this concept, pursuing it to the ultimate conclusion, which is that the award for Best Foreign Film must always go to a loss-making film which is so original that no American would ever want to remake it in English.

British films, as another course stresses, come from a tradition which is different both from the European and the American tradition. British films try either to emulate an American formula or to be so British it hurts. One way you end up with ambitious films which the Americans would have done better; the other way you end up with Ealing comedies, black and white backstreet dramas or films with an ex-Python being silly in the lead

role. Neither kind should ever be given an Oscar.

Money is not neglected. The Academy offers courses in creative accountancy, showing how a film never makes a profit however successful, so that the "profits" do not need to be shared. There are courses in power structure study in the world of Hollywood, sorting out agents, actors, studio heads, producers and writers in their correct order of importance. That, as a matter of fact, is the correct order. There is a course on how to award prizes to writers...

(This is a hard one. Writers have to get prizes now and then, but do you give the prize to the writer who thought of it all, or the ones who replaced him? All writers on a film get fired except the last one, and he may not have written any

FO on a shoestring

Sir: The member of the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee who claimed to have found the mechanics of an old banger under the bonnet of the Foreign Office's Rolls Royce may have been a bit confused about what he was actually looking at: what is more likely to have been there is only the sketchiest remnants of any engine at all ("Catalogue of errors" over Sierra Leone", 10 February).

From 1991 to 1995 I was British ambassador in Cameroon, a country formed from the merger of the old French territory of Cameroon and British Southern Cameroon. Whereas my French colleague once boasted to me that he had 250 French officials answerable to him, I had to manage with just three other British staff. And the French ambassador only had to cover Cameroon; I was simultaneously accredited to the Central African Republic, Chad and Equatorial Guinea - an area as great as that of the then 12 members of the EU.

Nor were the resources dedicated to the area in London any more impressive. The handful of staff in the FCO's Africa Equatorial Department had to advise ministers on a region that included a succession of international trouble spots ranging from Somalia and Rwanda to Zaire, Nigeria and Liberia - and Sierra Leone. Perhaps not surprisingly, the number of substantive policy communications which I received from London in four years could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Complacent talk about a service able to "punch above its weight" and "make bricks without straw" ignores the fact that neither of those activities is actually possible to any significant extent. If the Government is not prepared to allocate to our overseas representation the resources needed to deal with an increasingly complex world, then the Sierra Leone debacle is unlikely to remain an isolated case.

BILL QUANTRILL
Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire

Science vs religion

Sir: I am amazed at the reaction that Richard Dawkins has received (letters, 11 February). An engineer claims that e-mail sounds as "barking mad" as religion. It may, but e-mail works and can be shown to work. Areas of science may sound mad, but they can be shown to be true. Now, if we could have a demonstration of transubstantiation or reincarnation, we'd be getting somewhere.

BEN WALSH
San Francisco

Sir: For Dr Salah Ezzi (letter, 10 February) to suggest that we are religious simply because we hold an opinion on religion is disingenuous. I often express my dislike of football, but that doesn't make me a football fanatic.
PAUL SMITH
Caterham, Surrey

Senseless slaughter

Sir: Is Animal Aid the only voice raised in protest at the plan to shoot Britain's ruddy duck population to stop them hybridising the white-headed duck (report, 2 February)?

When this senseless slaughter was first suggested, 18 months ago, I contacted the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, telling them that I had not joined them for the society to practice marriage guidance for birds. I received letters of explanation and excuses, none saying anything other than that the white-headed duck, in Spain, was threatened, because the ruddy duck, resident in Britain, flew over there to mate with it. So what? Ethnic cleansing and racist outbursts by the very society that is supposed to protect all birds.

Am I the only one who has cancelled her membership to the RSPB? Will no one else help to prevent the slaughter of 4,000 healthy, beautiful ducks?
ANNE JONES
Seaford, East Sussex

Exposing the dark side of the glittering prizes

MANY PEOPLE have written to me asking why the Oscars are also known as the Academy Awards. What is the Academy after which they are named? Who goes to this Academy? What do they learn there?

Well, my children, the Academy after which the Oscars are named is a stately building in downtown California where the people who choose the Oscar winners are trained. Its full name is the Academy for Choosing Oscar Winners, the course is three years long and it is only open to people who have made a billion dollars out of the movie industry and are looking for a slightly quieter time. They enrol in the autumn of their life, and they spend three years and half a million dollars learning how to award Oscars. It's as simple as that.

Of course, nothing is quite as simple as that. They have to observe the ethos of the Academy (motto: "A happy film is a film that makes money") and behave impeccably for the three years they are there, for if a member of the Academy had a scandalous private life, it would reflect badly on the movie industry. That is why Oscar judges swear to observe three years of celibacy when entering the Academy, though a certificate of impotence will suffice instead.

There are various courses which they must attend at the Academy which will give them the grounding in basic Oscar-choosing. Some of the many courses on offer include: "Why British films can come second but not first"

"Why American remakes are better than the French original"

"Don't say Mafia - say anonymous funding"

"Look out - here comes Barry Norman!"

"A lifetime achievement - something you give to someone you forgot to give an Oscar to."

"Barry who?"

"Did you know Billy Wilder was still alive?"

"Ways in which we might use Bob Hope this year."

"Billy who?"

"Bob who?"

David Putnam said recently that the difference between Hollywood and Europe was that the Hollywood tradition sprang from the retail trade, from people who were out there seeing what sold and what didn't, and that the European tradition was based on the idea of art, it came from people who want-

Mr B
what

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When it comes to the railways, don't get mad, get even

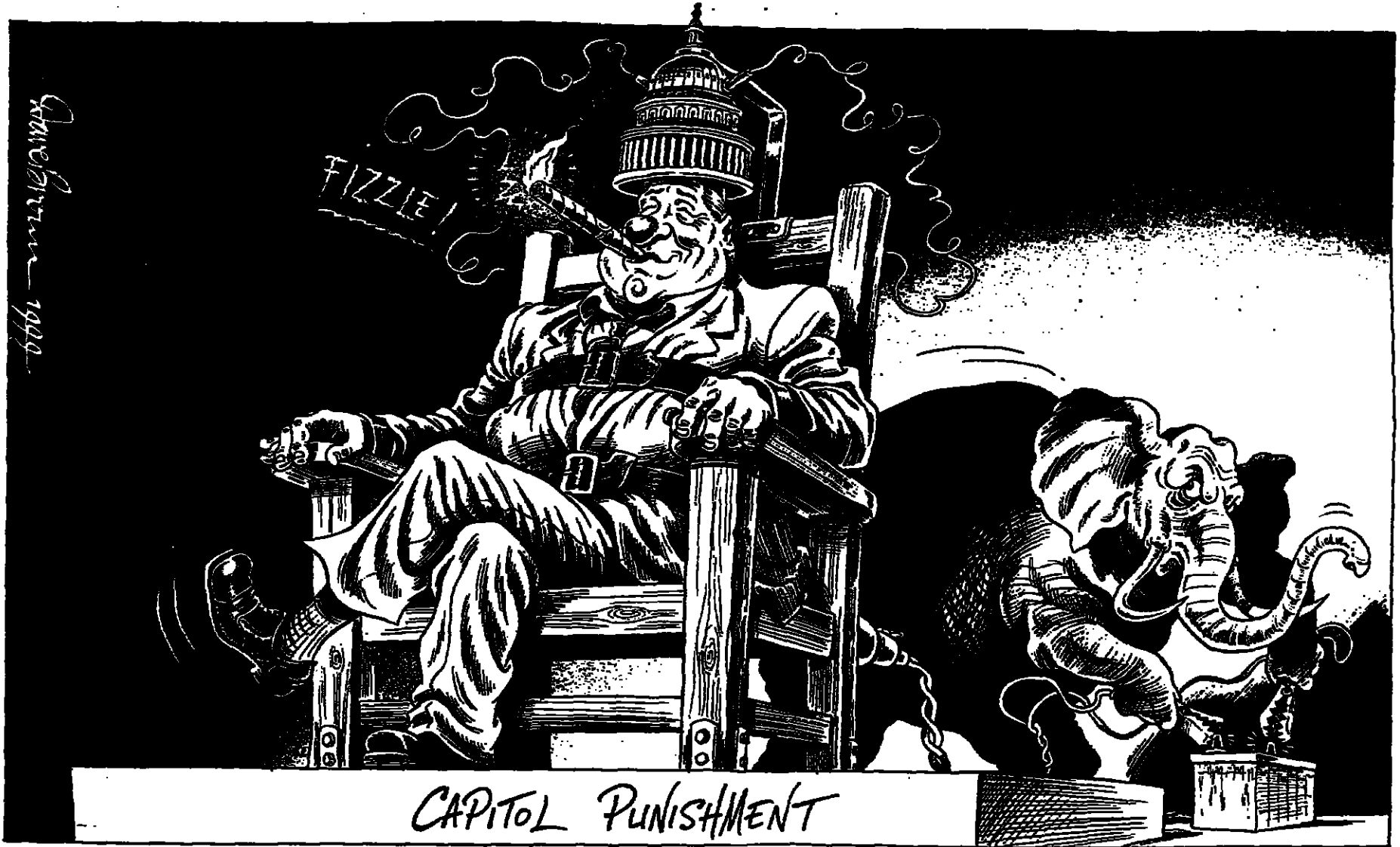
WHAT IS to be done about our railways? John Prescott has been huffing and puffing like Thomas the Tank Engine, but to no effect. "Passengers deserve much better," he said in May last year. "It is broke - I intend to fix it," he said of the rail system in August. "I'll call time on the companies that run the trains," he tub-thumped at Labour conference last September. But when the train companies miss their targets, or are even found to be in breach of their franchise agreements, what happens? They get told off, they are given fines - although sometimes those are cancelled, on the grounds that if they pay the fines the money will come out of passenger services - and the Deputy Prime Minister huffs and puffs some more.

The time has come for action. Mr Prescott has to sack one of the train companies. As well as being the right thing to do, this will please everybody. The Labour Party will love it, because its members still want to know what happened to the "publicly owned, publicly accountable" railway that they thought Tony Blair had promised them. Nationalising a bit of the network while the franchise is put up for auction will cheer those for whom the Morrisonian corporation is the highest form of social and economic organisation. The free marketeers will applaud - or should - because the incentives for success are weak unless they are balanced by real penalties for failure. And the public will love it, because they are fed up and want to see someone get a bloody nose.

But which company should it be? As soon as that question is asked, the problems with the performance indicators published yesterday become evident. Should Silverlink lose its franchise because it was awarded the bottom E grade? No, because it took over the North London Line, which would have been grade Z before and is much better now. And the unfairness of Silverlink's grading is typical of a much wider problem.

The truth is that the railways have improved since privatisation, but from such a low base that the 14 per cent increase in passenger traffic means that more people have more to complain about. The growth in rail traffic has come as a surprise to the Conservative ministers who designed the regulatory regime, and proves that they had no confidence in privatisation. They believed the propaganda of their opponents - including those in the Tory party who dubbed it the "poll tax on wheels".

The railways were sold off under a regime designed to deal with stable or declining traffic; but, not surprisingly, private companies turned out to be better at marketing than the bureaucrats and train buffs of British Rail. So now we have a system of perverse or misguided incentives. Nine-tenths of Railtrack's income is fixed, so it has no incentive to carry more trains - while the train com-



panies, having attracted more passengers, are being castigated for overcrowding, congestion and delays. What is more, the long-term outlook for the railways must be one of sustained growth, if only because the forecast growth in road traffic cannot be carried on the existing network.

Mr Prescott should be praised for getting rid of the rail regulators, John O'Brien and John Swift, who proved themselves to be ineffectual. But he should ensure that their successors set up a better system of carrots to reward companies that succeed in attracting more passengers.

However, Mr Prescott should carry a big stick too. Last August, North Western Trains withdrew services altogether for five days on the Manchester-Oldham-Rochdale loop. For this breach of its franchise it was required to offer two weeks' free travel and to agree a "recovery plan". It should have lost the franchise. Once he has reviewed the franchise terms to make sure they reward success, Mr Prescott should huff and puff no more. The next company in breach of contract should be out.

Why should we pay for the BBC to dupe us?

THE BBC's justification for broadcasting Vanessa Feltz's tacky confessional programme on daytime television is that it is "educational". That might just wash for Ainsley Harriott's cookery show, but Vanessa is simply voyeurism, and has no place on a public service network.

Even if that had been an argument for it, it would have been exploded by the revelation that some of the people confessing their private miseries were fakes. Perhaps it is that the British do not take as easily as Americans to getting in touch with their feelings on live television. Perhaps there just is not enough misery around to fill the hours of daytime programming that need to be filled. Whatever the reason, the BBC will gain from this unsavoury episode if it realises it should not have been in this business in the

first place. It cannot even argue that such programming is cheap - the substantial money it spends does not go into production values, but into Ms Feltz's bank account (and those of sundry agents for the actor-participants).

We do not need to re-run the old argument that the BBC must compete for ratings in order to justify the licence fee; of course the BBC needs a mass audience. But if it competes simply by imitation then it undermines the argument for the licence fee, because it does not produce anything that the private sector could not.

That means that there is a case for *EastEnders*, which is a strong contemporary drama, but not for things like *Vanessa*. The BBC has to maintain its distinctiveness and its reputation. When audiences watch *Jerry Springer* or *Blind Date* they know it is all nonsense; with *Vanessa* they may know it is rubbish, but they expect it to be true rubbish. The Corporation cannot broadcast with irony: it should try to rescue its credibility from the debacle by dropping the show forthwith.

Mr Blair is doing to the dole what De Gaulle did to Algeria

SOME TIME before the last election, it is said, Tony Blair confided in the late Lord Rothermere that his relationship to the dependency culture was that of De Gaulle to Algeria: he was uniquely qualified to yank his country out of it.


Given that the proprietor of the *Daily Mail* was suitably impressed by the argument that only Labour could be trusted to reform welfare because only Labour believed in it, it was appropriate that the Prime Minister should choose to trail this week's Welfare Reform and Pensions Bill by writing an article in Rothermere's newspaper. There was a much-commented-on, rather macho, "come and get us" subtext in the announcement for Labour backbenchers considering rebellion. As Alistair Darling, the Social Security Secretary, wrote in the *Independent* that the new regime would be "far tougher than most people thought" and disclosing that everyone, including single mothers, would be called to a compulsory interview to discuss "what they could be doing with their lives other than claiming benefit", the Blair article made an even larger claim: that it marked the end to the "something-for-nothing" welfare state, and that it was a "fundamental break with the past".

We'll come in a minute to whether that claim is justified. But it certainly looks like good party politics. At the very moment when William Hague goes West to learn at the feet of Governor George W Bush - among other things - about what the Governor calls his "historic reforms to put

welfare recipients to work", a Labour government seems to be putting some of the Governor's most cherished goals into practice several years before Mr Hague has any chance of putting anything into practice at all. Moreover, the De Gaulle analogy was probably correct. To understand why simply ask yourself whether a Tory could even talk about the "something-for-nothing" welfare state and get away with it.

Further, while all the signs are that there will be Labour revolts, possibly quite substantial ones, on the Bill, I do not detect the widespread sullenness and resentment among the silent majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party that there was over the ill-thought-out changes to lone parent benefit cuts in late 1997. Nor does this spring solely from blind obedience to the Leader: There are some seriously hard cases thrown up by the drive to reform the benefits system, particularly among the disabled, and these are likely to be the subjects of several concerted efforts to amend the Bill. But while it may be unpalatable to say so, MPs know that for every truly disabled constituent who isn't getting what he or she deserves, there is another complaining about the man down the road who seems to be digging his garden energetically despite the bad back that qualifies him for incapacity benefit - a benefit, incidentally, which now goes to a quarter of all men over 60.

Are we really that ill as a nation? Of course we're not. The fact is that successive governments, mainly but not exclusively Tory, have used the



DONALD MACINTYRE
The Bill may be the end of 'something for nothing' but in terms of welfare reform, it's just the beginning

benefit as a convenient means of reducing the unemployment register. This is just one of the ways in which there is a large popular constituency, including among Labour supporters, for the mantra: work for those who can, security for those who can't.

At this point, however, various received wisdoms kick in. One says wearily, we know all that, but the Darling proposals are a whimper rather than a big bang; and that the big idea of welfare reform ended with the ministerial career of its radical guru, Frank Field. This seriously underestimates what the unflashy but shrewd and determined Darling has achieved since he took over a shellshocked DSS last July. Its main provisions have been so well trailed that there has been relatively little interest in the Bill as a whole. Yet

having quietly shelved some of the wackier notions in his in-tray when he arrived at the department, he has assembled one of the most far-reaching measures of the parliament.

Overall, the pensions changes, while guaranteeing a minimum income for the poorest pensioners, will see the current 60-40 public-private share of pensions reversed over the next four or five decades; the stipulation that widows over 45 without dependent children will not receive automatic benefit, without being considered for work, trends on previously taboo territory; the "single gateway" is a concerted effort to break down dependency; and while the Bill provides for welcome increases in money for severely disabled young people and small children, the exponential rise in incapacity benefit will now be reversed. Finally, it is not true, as some claim, that no young people have been refused benefit for rejecting places on the New Deal programmes. Unpublished figures, I'm told, show that 4,401 people between 18 and 24 were indeed refused benefit last year.

But just because Labour has boldly gone where the Tories feared to does not make the reforms right-wing. Overshadowing all of them is the commitment to work as the emancipation from poverty. It is of a piece with what is beginning to clarify as Gordon Brown's remarkably coherent use of the tax system, including the Working Family Tax Credit, and the national minimum wage, to make work pay.

Ah, but where are the jobs? Well, the Government's line is that this is a question of matching the workless

to the jobs that are available - 500,000 vacancies, according to last month's figures. But even if this is too glib, the critics have to answer this question: are they saying it would be more convenient if joblessness could be concentrated on sink estates, in ghettos of the weakest, the poorest, and the longest-term unemployed, and among young people who are second- and third-generation unemployed, brought up in workless as well as fatherless households? Or will they admit that these people, too, should be exposed to incentives to escape the cycle of dependency? In other words, that they should be able to maximise their share of the jobs available?

That doesn't mean that work is the answer in every case; Darling has been impressed by a case in his own constituency of a bright young woman who was forced to take a cleaning job from 5am to 8am to make ends meet, and now, thanks to the New Deal for lone parents, is about to take a fulfilling part-time secretarial job in Edinburgh that still allows her time for child care. Equally, he knows that some women with small children, faced with the loss of a partner or husband, no doubt fulfil the Government's criterion of being able to work. That doesn't mean that they should, or will want to, go straight to work. Nor does the Bill reform the whole welfare system, or anything like it, at a stroke. Beyond it, to give just one example, looms the problem of housing benefit, all £13bn a year of it, much of it a landlords' racket, and currently under review in Whitehall. Darling's Bill is only a start; but it is bigger than it looks.

QUOTE OF THE DAY
"My girls are not strippers, they're entertainers."
Peter Stringfellow,
night-club owner

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
"Religion is love; in no case is it logic."
Beatrice Webb,
socialist intellectual

MUST END SOON



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CULTURE MEANS, in part, the effort to decide what culture means. But the meaning of the list of Academy Award nominees is perfectly ambiguous, just as it has been every year since 1929. It means whatever you want it to mean, however you choose to slice it. The movies nominated reflect the times, of course, but only so far. Cate Blanchett's and Judi Dench's separate versions of Queen Elizabeth resemble each other little more than

they do Bette Davis's version. If nothing else, we are asked to believe that the list of nominees reflects the Academy's verdict on the state of the film industry. It reflects more accurately the state of lobbying within the film industry, as well as the industry's desire to project a respectable image before a worldwide audience.

The New York Times

WITH THE word "independent" getting bandied about so loosely, it would have been great to see nominations for Todd Solondz and Don Roos, the writer-directors of, respectively, *Happiness* and *The Opposite of Sex*. Nervy, outrageous and

fiendishly funny, both films sparkled with original dialogue, and both are more deserving of being called independent than the admirable but conventional *Shakespeare in Love*.

(Edward Guthmann)
San Francisco Chronicle

WHILE OSCAR nominations used to be reserved exclusively for major Hollywood studio releases, this year almost the exact opposite was true.

What voters go for instead of Hollywood behemoths are the kinds of films that the academy has liked for time out of mind: stories in which involving characters outnumber skyrocketing explosions, in

The real cost of cheapness



DEBORAH ORR
The burning desire to deliver cheap medicine to the British public might have an ulterior motive

YOU'LL NO doubt have noticed that this is a broadsheet newspaper. But what you may not know is that if, being a broadsheet reader, you do your food shopping at any supermarket other than Sainsbury, Safeway or Tesco, then you're a weirdo. Further, if you're a Sainsbury shopper, then your favourite television programmes are *Modern Times* and *Food and Drink*; if you're a Safeway shopper, you like *Holiday*, *Dispatches* and *Father Ted*; and if you're a Tesco shopper, well, *The Big Breakfast* and *Blue Peter* are the shows for you. And if you eat food regularly, then you'll probably find the idea that market-research company Taylor Nelson Sofres makes assumptions about every aspect of your lifestyle based only on the supermarket where you shop, rather irritating.

The company stands by its findings though, and the experience of Asda bears them out. Asda attempted at the beginning of the decade to move away from its core values of pricing aimed at working-class customers and become more like Sainsbury and Tesco. The realignment was disastrous and Asda only recovered by returning to its previous strategies and thereby winning its customers back.

And who are those Asda customers? Well, they usually have cable or satellite television, although their favourite shows are *GMTV* and *The Really Useful Show*. They feel that low prices and the availability of goods such as CDs and clothes are highly important, although they consider their families to be absolutely the most important thing in their lives. They don't use the Internet, they do read the tabloids, and they like health and beauty magazines. They also seem to be tremendously well-looking after by the supermarket they give their loyalty to, since at a casual glance it would seem that Asda has done more than any other British supermarket, indeed more even than any consumer protection organisation, to challenge price-fixing and offer bargain products.

It was Asda which made the most aggressive challenge to the net book agreement, eventually bringing their customers and everyone else newly published books at cut prices. The company has also led



Shoppers arrive at an Asda store in Wakefield, Yorkshire, last year to buy designer clothes at bargain prices

Steve Forrest/Guzelian

attacks on the "grey market" designer labels which again are massively overpriced, launched its own cut-price, high-quality clothing range under the label George, slashed notoriously inflated perfume prices in the run-up to Christmas, and has for years challenged the practice of resale price maintenance, whereby pharmaceutical suppliers set minimum prices that retailers must charge.

Badgered by the supermarket chain, which after years of defying the big pharmaceutical companies has injunctions standing against it from all of the drugs manufacturers, the Office of Fair Trading launched legal moves on Wednesday to bring the cost of over-the-counter drugs - which it says amount to nothing more than a £300 million tax on the sick - down to a fraction of their current price.

Some of the mark-ups on these drugs are unbelievable. A packet of 16 Anadin, currently sold at a minimum of £1.52, could still turn a profit if sold at a retail price of 20 pence, while it is estimated that in some cases the lifting of restrictions will bring prices down by as much as 1,000 per cent.

Only in the pharmaceutical

industry does restrictive pricing survive, and while it is the pharmaceutical companies which benefit most - they count their profits in billions and always maintain their position as safe "growth shares" on the stock market - it is Britain's small local pharmacies, around 21,000 of them, that these huge mark-ups are ostensibly there to protect.

Nobody, though, appears to be on the side of the small pharmacies, not even the Consumers Association, which believes that while some of the small companies will not survive the abolition of RPM, the move will still be overwhelmingly in the public interest. I've often noticed that there are still lots of small independent pharmacies around, and marvelled that while many of their products are available more cheaply even in the larger chains of chemists, not to mention the supermarkets, they continue to survive.

When my son was a new-born, I relied totally on the local pharmacy for every new need that I discovered in his first weeks. Hanging out there as much as I did, I noticed, too, that lots of elderly people visited the pharmacy not only for their medi-

cines, but just for some talk and some company. I hate to think that the advance of the supermarkets will squeeze such businesses out, even though I don't think the big pharmaceutical companies should be making a whacking profit from the personal services that are provided by pharmacists.

And, of course, while we all use supermarkets, we all remain highly ambivalent to them. It's hard to see any supermarket as a champion of the people, especially after last year's revelations that supermarket prices in Britain were up to four times as high as those on the continent and in the United States. These accusations are expected to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, although the four big chains - Tesco, Sainsbury, Safeway and Asda - maintain that since they have not formally colluded to keep prices high, the MMC cannot touch them.

And while allegations that the four big supermarket chains have failed to pass low prices from British farmers on to customers, and have yet to be reported on by the Office of Fair Trading, Asda's own new agreement with British Farmers can be seen as a pre-emptive admission of guilt.

In January, the company - which was founded by a group of Yorkshire farmers and named by shortening the old name Associated Dairies - announced a return to its roots. It has embarked on a cost-cutting exercise whereby British meat, fruit and vegetables will be sold at a total of £3 million less than the store originally projected, while the company will also run up a £20 million bill by switching from foreign firms to "buy British".

This again could be read as altruism, if it were not for the fact that Asda and the others have been turning a highly dishonest profit at the expense of British farming for years. This leads one to believe that this burning desire to deliver cheap medicine to the British public might have an ulterior motive too.

And, of course, there is one. While the supermarkets are right to maintain that the MMC can't touch them, they are at the same time acting as a cartel which will not be happy until its market dominance - already staggering - is complete, and every single person's personal habits can be broadly marshalled under the umbrella of their chosen supermarket: people who are

susceptible to colds shop at Somersfield, folk with stomach ulcers favour Kwik Save etc.

My own hope is that while the RPM will be ended, there will be some recognition that even over-the-counter drugs need some specialist advice at the point of sale. At the moment, if you go into the pharmacy to get your asthma prescription but at the same time ask for a packet of Nurofen, the pharmacist will tell you that you may suffer an allergic reaction if you're taking both drugs. If you go in pregnant to buy virtually anything, the pharmacist will warn you of the dangers. Surely this is a public service we should not be cavalier with?

In Spain, Germany and France, to name but a few, all medicines can be sold only through pharmacies. While in Britain supermarkets are already selling their own-brand over-the-counter medicines at competitive prices, this should be enough to service the customers they have who really do feel that it is necessary to buy their home remedies along with the rest of their weekly shopping. Everything else, with their price restrictions removed, should stay in the hands of the chemist.

RIGHT OF REPLY

JOHN WOODWARD



The director of the British Film Institute replies to our leading article on the film industry

THE INDEPENDENT'S disparaging remarks (10 February) aimed at lottery-funded British movies, are premature. Too few films have yet been released to make any sensible judgement possible.

Bear in mind that even the Americans expect many of their films to fail, knowing that the successes pay for the rest. The *Independent* seems to take the view that one or two bad British movies equals disaster.

Lottery funding is part of a long-term strategy to build a proper base for the UK film industry, and will, in time, also tackle the problems facing the distribution of British films and script development. It will be years before the true value of lottery funding can be assessed. Meanwhile, it continues to play a major role in the British film renaissance, so don't knock it.

The *Independent* notes that the finance for most of the latest crop of British Oscar-nominated films came from the US. This is a more tricky issue. US dollars spent in British studios are important because they keep our craft skills and our production and post-production infrastructure intact. Only a fool would reject this investment when films such as *Shakespeare in Love* then carry a powerful message around the world about British heritage.

Nevertheless, if some free-standing British film-financing companies had existed to invest in *The Full Monty* or *Shakespeare in Love*, then the profits would be coming back to the UK for reinvestment. Come to think of it, that was the idea behind the three lottery-based film franchises that were launched two years ago, and will start to deliver new British films to your local cinemas later this year.

So, if this script has a moral, it is simply: "Do not rush to judge it!"

Wake up to America's nightmare

WE IN Europe are worldly souls, only too aware that life at every turn can deliver a terrible kick in the pants. Not so America, at least in its preferred image of itself, that rosy-hued vision packaged as the American Dream.

In politicians' speeches, the Dream becomes a living person, a member of the family. It is, depending on the national condition, to be cherished, protected, honoured or revived. Above all, it must never, never be abandoned.

The vision has two central tenets. One is that America is a land of limitless opportunity. The other is that each new generation will live better than its parents, taking another step towards the goal of an earthly paradise. The first is still valid; but the country has yet to come to terms with the unpleasant truth that the second is not.

It is hard to believe - as the US continues to enjoy its longest business upswing in modern times, when Wall Street has registered one of the greatest bull markets in history - that poverty in America is actually increasing. For the majority of people, real wages have fallen over the last quarter-century. Always a harsh place, America is becoming harsher still.



FRIDAY BOOK
COLD NEW WORLD: GROWING UP IN A HARDER COUNTRY
BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN, PICADOR, £8.99

Today it is splitting into two countries that do not know each other. The larger one is educated, highly skilled and ever more affluent. The other is populated by people, mostly young and from broken homes, trapped in low-paid jobs. For them, any mobility is downward.

A new underclass is emerging, the victim of post-industrial capitalism, unprotected by trade unions, virtually forgotten by the media and ignored by the state. Now, however, it has a chronicler in William Finnegan.

Hell is to be found in many forms and many places, and Finnegan spent six years wandering around his own country searching it out. The outcome is an American Quartet, focussing on four sets of young and hopeless lives. There is Terry Jackson, from a familiar black ghetto environment in

New Haven, Connecticut, followed by Lane Mitchell and her family from an already impoverished black community in the old Deep South, devastated by a massive drugs sweep by the FBI.

Then we move to the great industrial farms of Yakima Valley, in Washington state, where Rosa and Rafael Guerrero emigrated from Mexico in 1977 in search of *una vida mejor*, a better life - only to watch their son Juan sink into a bleak subculture of gangs and petty crime.

Finally, we meet Mindy from the white suburban deserts outside Los Angeles, a teenage girl deep into what Finnegan calls "the sort of casually harrowing life I was beginning to regard as common," mixed up with drugs, guns, and neo-Nazis, and ambitious to become an exotic dancer.



For many of the young in the US, the only social mobility is downward

These four hells are made darker still by Finnegan's subtle empathy, his intelligence and his meticulous reportage. And, though geographically and culturally different, they are basically the same. There are the same escapes into drugs and gangs, the omnipresent shadow of race - as well as a common nihilism and bleak certainty that life will just get worse. Once "middle-classness" was the distinguishing mark of America; for ever more of its citizens, it is a rockface on which they struggle to retain a foothold.

None of this, of course, is unique to America. France, Britain and Germany have their own similar hells. And for each miserable tale in *Cold New World*, real life can offer dozens of success stories in support of the American Dream. But things are worse in America because of its traditional belief in small government and self-advancement. And they matter to us because, sooner or later, what happens in America tends to happen here.

Where does the fault lie? With parents who cannot provide a stable family background, and with eco-

omic globalisation that takes no prisoners and has helped destroy the trade unions which once gave workers a voice. But it also lies in America's mind, in its belief that those who fail have only themselves to blame.

How else to explain the Clinton welfare reforms of 1996, that will thrust another million people into poverty - or places like Bridgeport, Connecticut, a few miles from Terry Jackson's New Haven, which I visited in 1991? Decayed and despairing, the town was about to declare bankruptcy. Just across the city line sat Fairfield County, the richest county in the entire US. But for neighbouring Bridgeport, it gave not a cent or a thought.

Such is the abyss between the two Americas, which widens every year. Yet, miraculously, an opportunity presents itself. The amazing American economy has started to produce huge budget surpluses. What a chance to use serious money not to order weapons, or cut taxes - but to help save America's forgotten people from themselves.

RUPERT CORNWELL

FRIDAY POEM

FROM 'THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM'
BY EDWARD FITZGERALD

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse - and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness -
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

"How sweet is mortal Sovranity!" - think some:
Others - "How blest the Paradise to come!"
Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest;
Oh, the brave Music of a distant Drum!

From 'The Penguin Book of Victorian Verse', edited by Daniel Karlin (Penguin, £10.99)

Look to the Rose that blows about us - "Lo,
Laughing," she says, "into the World I blow:
At once the silken Tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes - or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two - is gone.

THE INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPH



Baby Elephant by Philip Meech Ref 00102

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Sir Ashley Bramall

ASHLEY BRAMALL dedicated a full lifetime to local government and to public service. As leader of the Inner London Education Authority for 11 years from 1970, he accomplished the tricky task of leading a large education authority whilst implementing radical and necessary reforms.

Born in 1916, he was chairman of the Oxford University Labour Club and treasurer of the Oxford Union by the age of 23. During the Second World War he served in the Army, attaining the rank of Major. He was closely involved in Operation Fortitude, the brilliant Allied deception operation which tricked the Germans into keeping their Fifteenth Army tied up in the Pas de Calais long after D-Day. Bramall spoke German fluently, having travelled there many times before the war. His knowledge must have been very useful for the British army, with his own contribution no doubt further sharpened by the fact his younger brother Edwin (who became Field Marshal Lord Bramall, Chief of the Defence Staff 1982-85) was in the thick of fighting in Normandy.

After the war, Ashley Bramall's interest in Germany led naturally to a posting in the British zone, where he participated in the reconstruction programme. He was particularly proud of his work in rebuilding proper trade unions with functioning internal democracies. This close interest in all matters German endured for the rest of his life.

He was elected to Parliament for Bexley in 1946, winning a closely fought by-election on the very day that the new Labour government brought in bread rationing. Ironically, that unpopular policy had resulted from the need to keep the German population in the British zone from

starvation. In his book *Labour in Power 1945-51* (1984), Kenneth O. Morgan noted Labour's difficulties in holding Bexley, "even with as able a candidate as Ashley Bramall". He held the seat till 1950, losing to the Conservative candidate, Edward Heath, by 133 votes.

Although he fought Bexley again in 1951 and 1959, his public service now became focused on local government. Joining Westminster City Council in 1959, he served as leader of the Labour opposition for

*His removal from
its leadership
marked the
beginning of the
end of the ILEA*

a number of years. He served on the council until 1968.

In 1961 he was elected to the London County Council for Bethnal Green - the start of a 26-year career on first the LCC, later the Greater London Council (GLC), and on the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). From 1970 to 1981 he led the ILEA with great skill and effectiveness. The post was unpaid, but the duties more than full-time. Under his leadership, the drive to build a truly comprehensive secondary school system in inner London was redoubled.

In addition to being a passionate believer in comprehensives, Bramall was dedicated to improved nursery provision; better school accommodation - all too many schools still had outside toilets; and to school meal

provision. He paid particular attention to the very special situation in London schools following immigration from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean in the post-war period. For example, he realised that over 100 different languages were spoken by London children and many thousands lived in families where English was not the first language. Despite budget constraints, the ILEA invested in extra teachers and staff to tackle these and related challenges. Corporal punishment was also abolished under Bramall's leadership.

The remarkable achievements of the ILEA under his guidance ended in 1981 with the hard-left take-over at County Hall. Bramall was replaced as Leader in one of a series of ill-considered decisions by

the Labour Group, then considerably influenced by the collective madness and fundamentalism sweeping the London Labour Party at the time. The change undermined the ILEA and eroded confidence just as it needed maximum support in the face of a doctrinaire Conservative government. Bramall's removal from ILEA leadership marked the start of a series of tragic events which led to the abolition and break-up of this remarkable education authority.

Although hurt by the events of 1981 and in little sympathy with the gesture politics of the hard-left GLC and ILEA leadership in subsequent years, Bramall remained active on the GLC and ILEA and re-focused his activities into other areas. His lifelong love of music and the arts

was underlined by his chairmanship of the National Council for Drama Training between 1981 and 1989. He also served as a Governor of the Museum of London from 1981 and as Honorary Secretary of the Theatres Advisory Council from 1987 to 1991.

He remained fascinated by education, with an especially close bond to Pimlico Comprehensive School. He was a governor of the school from the time it was built in the 1960s through to his death. He was chairman of the school's governors for most of these years. From 1984 to 1990, he was a member of the Council of City University and in 1992 became Chairman of the Westminster Further Education College.

A skilled barrister, he was an expert on housing law, including the

Rent Acts and Landlord and Tenant legislation. He remained very active in his local Labour Party right till the end of his life. In his last couple of weeks, he was boosted by personal letters from both David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, and the Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

MARTIN GARSIDE

Ernest Ashley Bramall, politician: born Hove, Sussex 6 January 1916; called to the Bar, Inner Temple 1949; MP (Labour) for Bexley 1946-50; Leader, Inner London Education Authority 1970-81; GLC 1975; Chairman, Greater London Council 1982-83; married 1939 Margaret Taylor (two sons; marriage dissolved), 1950 Gery Bloch (one son); died London 10 February 1999.



Bramall canvassing Mrs Tadman of Bexley during the 1946 by-election. He won the constituency for Labour

Bobby Troup

TOMMY DORSEY was a man with a corrosive sense of humour and a total lack of sympathy for his employees. Typical of his remarks was his description of his pianist Paul Smith. "He's the only guy I know," said Dorsey, "who can play chicken shit and chicken salad at the same time."

Bobby Troup became Dorsey's staff songwriter in 1941. His brief was to write songs for the band's singers, Frank Sinatra and Connie Haines, and for its vocal group, the Pied Pipers. Regrettably, for a man who was later to write the classic "Route 66", the only one of his compositions for Dorsey and Sinatra that survives in the memory was "You're a Snootie Little Cutie".

Troup escaped from Dorsey into the more gentle surroundings of the Marine Corps in 1942, where he produced several service musical shows as well as fighting during his four years in the Pacific sector.

A musical career was cut out for him when he began working in the music stores owned by his family (who changed their name from Traub when Bobby's grandfather first emigrated to the United States from Germany), and during his time there he wrote his first hit song, "Daddy", for the show *Two Lattes From Manhattan* (1941). The song became a hit when Sammy Kaye recorded it.

After his discharge from the Marines in 1946 Troup travelled from his home in Pennsylvania to Los Angeles to resume his composing career and then wrote his biggest hit, "Route 66", to commemorate that journey to the West Coast. The song became a hit when Nat "King" Cole recorded it. Troup's other hits included "Baby, Baby, All the Time", and he wrote the lyrics to Neal Hefti's hit song "Girl Talk".

He was a fine pianist who sang in a sophisticated jazz style and he became a sort of hip Noel Coward, working in clubs with a trio. The trombonist Bob Enevoldsen played double bass for him and he had the virtuoso Howard Roberts on guitar. Enevoldsen's orchestra accompanied him on an album for Capitol in 1953 and both men were in Troup's sextet when he recorded a jazz album in 1955.

He worked with Johnny Mercer, who wrote lyrics for some of Troup's compositions, and Troup recorded an album of Mercer's songs in 1955. A lucrative contract with RCA in 1958 produced three high-quality albums. His song from this period, "The Meaning of the Blues" became something of a jazz standard, and was recorded by Miles Davis, amongst others.

Troup worked for many years with his trio in Los Angeles nightclubs and as a result was called in for regular television and film work. For the rock film *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956) he wrote the title song and a piece called "Rock Around the Rock". His future wife Julie London sang her hit "Cry Me a River" in the same film. London had a successful role in the film *Voice in the Mirror* (1958) and she and Troup co-composed the title song.

Troup then introduced the television series *Stars of Jazz* for two years and had an acting role in *The Five Pennies* (1959), with Danny Kaye and Louis Armstrong. It was ironic that in the same year he was cast as Tommy Dorsey in *Drum Crazy - The Gene Krupa Story*.

He married Julie London in 1960, and produced many of her albums. Troup also acted in *Dragnet* (1966), which featured and was directed by London's first husband, Jack Webb. He took a leading role as a lieutenant in a war drama, *First to Fight* (1966). Troup and his wife had acting roles from 1971 to 1978 as a doctor and a nurse respectively in NBC's television soap *Emergency!* Troup ac-

TIM BULLAMORE

Penelope Jane Tamblin, alternative medicine practitioner: born Bristol 18 July 1943; married 1964 Dr David Brohn (one son, two daughters); died Salford, Somerset 3 February 1999.



Author of 'Route 66'

company his wife on tours of Brazil in 1960 and in Japan in 1964. Although Johnny Mandel wrote the music for the film *M*A*S*H* (1970), Troup had an acting vignette as the exasperated jeep driver, his only line a morose and repeated "Goddam army!"

After the success of their careers, the two retired early and lived quietly in Encino in the San Fernando Valley, although Julie London made a few show-business appearances.

STEVE VOCE

Robert Williams Troup, songwriter, pianist and vocalist: born Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 18 October 1918; twice married (two sons, three daughters); died Sherman Oaks, California 7 February 1999.

Penny Brohn

PENNY BROHN was a woman of remarkable vision and courage who not only fought tenaciously against her own cancer, but also successfully challenged those who discredited her pioneering work at the Bristol Cancer Help Centre.

Diagnosed with breast cancer in October 1979, Brohn ventured on a personal healing journey that took her to clinics around the world. It was on one of these journeys with her friend Pat Pilkington the following year, to the clinic of Dr Josef Issels in Bavaria, that the pair decided to establish the pioneering centre in Bristol with a group of like-minded friends.

Their approach was a holistic one inviting patients to view their state of health or illness as the result of interacting influences between mind, body and spirit, and the environment in which they lived. Consequently, the treatment programmes they pioneered at the centre are individually tailored and include therapy, complementary medicine, support, healing and orthodox medicine.

Pat Pilkington and her husband, Canon Christopher Pilkington of the glass family, were already running a healing centre in Bristol. By pooling their resources and ideas and drawing on the voluntary experience of like-minded professionals, the

Bristol Cancer Help Centre came into being.

Before long a journalist was dispatched to expose the flaws in their complementary medicine. But so impressed was he by their work that he made a six-part television series, *The Gentle Way*, which was broadcast by the BBC. The response was overwhelming and it became clear that the centre would have to be put on a more formal footing. Staff had to be recruited and paid, a residential building acquired, and charges made for care (although a charitable trust provides financial help for the most needy).

The centre was formally opened in its new building, Grove House, in 1983 by the Prince of Wales and throughout the 1980s provided hope and inspiration to cancer sufferers the world over. During this time Brohn found her own health improving and was able to devote a great deal of energy to spreading her belief that there was far more to cancer care than conventional medicine.

But the obstacles the centre encountered were, if anything, as difficult as those Brohn faced with her personal health. Her approach was viewed with scepticism by the medical establishment and at times she risked alienating even her own medical team. Step by step she negotiated the acceptance of her ideas and

created a widespread understanding of the true nature and value of what is now called the "Bristol approach" to cancer.

Speaking last April, she said: "In those days you were told there was nothing you could do and just leave it to the doctors, which was very frustrating. In the centre, patients come to help themselves. I wanted to get the patient involved. I found out that patients were being excluded from their own recovery programme."

On the verge of taking a back seat in September 1990, Brohn was dealt a potentially devastating blow by publication in *The Lancet* of the erroneous results of the Chivers Report, which had been funded by two major cancer charities. It purported to show that, instead of being helped, women who were treated for breast cancer at the Bristol centre were twice as likely to die prematurely from the disease. Brohn took the brunt of the media savaging that followed with an exhausting series of combative exchanges on both television and in the newspapers.

In the aftermath of the report the 11 women who had taken part in the survey fought back. They publicly denounced the findings and, in an unprecedented display of patient power, challenged not only the scientists who had carried out the study but also the cancer charities



'The Bristol approach'

that had sponsored it. Their campaign resulted in a public apology and new guidelines being drawn up by the Charities Commission for the funding of medical research.

Born Penny Tamblin in Clifton, a suburb of Bristol, she studied at Leeds University before becoming a child care officer in Bristol in 1967. She went on to work as a lecturer at Bristol Polytechnic (now the University of the West of England) before training as an acupuncturist and specialist in Chinese medicine in Hong Kong and Leamington Spa. From this grew her awareness of the complex inter-relationship of

mind, body and spirit. When diagnosed with cancer she was convinced that it was a disease of all of her and not just her breast. Brohn drew on every conceivable source of inspiration in her brave and pioneering attempt to bring the cancer in her body under control. She wrote two books, *Gentle Giants* (1987) and *The Bristol Programme* (1992), about her life and work, and appeared on countless television and radio programmes as well as dealing with sheaves of correspondence from cancer patients.

After the 1990 setback, Brohn stayed on at the Bristol Cancer Help Centre to help repair the inordinate damage. Soon afterwards she suffered her most serious recurrence of the cancer in the form of a spinal bone tumour. Following conventional surgery she partially retired to Crete where, at a stage in her illness when many patients would have been in a hospice, she spent several blissful years renovating a mountainous cottage under the comforting rays of the Greek sunshine.

Today the Bristol Cancer Help Centre continues to run courses and offers a range of literature, tapes, videos and programmes designed to take patients through their therapeutic journey. Based on the premise that healing is a process and not an event, cancer sufferers are offered

advice on a range of issues including diet, breathing, exercise, visualisation, relaxation, meditation, creativity and massage. According to the centre, patients report a reduction in fear, anxiety and isolation; improvements in physical well-being, energy levels and sleep; and greater symptom control and tolerance of conventional treatments.

Throughout the difficult times Brohn took great comfort from the unwavering support of the Prince of Wales, who said: "The approach pioneered at Bristol has influenced the development and improvement of cancer services all over Britain."

Exceptionally beautiful, intelligent and gifted, Penny Brohn was blessed with a razor-sharp wit, a gift for communicating creative ideas and concepts, and seemingly boundless energy. She lived for almost 20 years with an illness for which there is normally only a 50 per cent five-year survival rate. But more than that she gave hope, comfort and arguably prolonged life to many thousands of other cancer sufferers.

TIM BULLAMORE

Penelope Jane Tamblin, alternative medicine practitioner: born Bristol 18 July 1943; married 1964 Dr David Brohn (one son, two daughters); died Salford, Somerset 3 February 1999.

Horace Taylor

DURING ONE day of the Blitz in the autumn of 1940, 121 unexploded bombs had to be dealt with in London. It was also a rather nerve-racking day for Sub-Lieutenant Horace Taylor who for his first job on bomb disposal was sent to defuse a 9ft-long mine weighing 2,000 kilos which had landed by the front gate of a large London hospital. It was a new type of mine and Taylor recalled: "We had little idea of how to handle them. There were no proper tools so we were working with ladies' hairpins, matchsticks, bent nails, a bicycle pump and the bulb of a motor horn."

First of all Taylor and his assistant, Able Seaman Ross, dug a fox-hole 100 yards from the mine. Ross was in stay in the hole logging Taylor's instructions; if anything went wrong, at least some information could be passed to the Admiralty. Taylor then informed the rather anxious



'I never felt afraid'

hospital authorities that if he managed to remove the small fuse he would blow his whistle and everyone could relax. But Taylor was anxious: "It was that little fuse that put the wind up us, because we knew that,

if we started it, we'd have 17 seconds to clear out and how far can you run in 17 seconds? But I couldn't afford to be scared what a stupid thing that was to do. A tidal wave of nurses came out after us. They wanted my tie, my shirt. I was nearly pulled apart. Such was the relief from the tension."

After his second bomb disposing job, which was at RAF Uxbridge, Taylor was awarded a George Cross. Soon afterwards a bomb he was working on in Leamington Spa blew him through two houses. His clothes had been blasted off him but he was still conscious when found. Knowing what had gone wrong he insisted on telling his boss for the sake of the rest of the crew before being taken off to the local hospital, where he was put in the Ladies' Ward.

Horace Taylor was born in 1908 and educated at Manchester Grammar School where he developed an interest in the Scout movement and

later became a Scout Commissioner of Central Division in 1937. He also joined the Civil Defence. When war broke out he volunteered for the Navy but was rejected. He wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty and told them "if they didn't do something very quickly, they were going to lose a good chap". The next day he received his commission.

After a job which involved defending the third floor of the Admiralty with a 45 Webley he began to work on bomb disposal. In 1944 he became a frogman specialising in the clearance of harbour obstructions including those on the Normandy beaches on D-Day.

After the war Taylor became a Travelling Commissioner for the Sea Scouts and from 1953 to 1973 was Field Commissioner for Southwest England; on his retirement he was appointed MBE.

A modest and good-natured man with an undoubted presence and a fund of stories, he was quick to analyse a problem and to offer suggestions as to its solution. When I interviewed him three years ago, I asked what had kept him going. A devout Christian, he replied, "In all the operations we did, I never felt afraid. It was prayer that kept me going. Every morning at breakfast time I'd ask God to hold my hand steady and deal with the treacherous little fuse. Each time my arm was taken in a firm grip and I was in safe keeping."

MAX ARTHUR

William Horace Taylor, naval officer, bomb disposal expert and scout: born Manchester 23 October 1908; GC 1941; MBE 1973; married 1946 Joan Skayfe d'Ingerthorpe (died 1985; one son, three daughters); died Banbury, Oxfordshire 16 January 1999.

Bobby
Troup

Tim Westoll

SHORTLY BEFORE his sudden death Tim Westoll had taken delivery of his book *The Complete Illustrated Check List of the Birds of the World*, which had occupied him for the last 25 years. This extraordinary project sprang partly from the inconvenience, during numerous bird-watching expeditions all over the world, of having to take a portmanteau, if not small library, of reference books to help with identification; and partly from frustration - in many cases there were no available guides or pictures of the various indigenous birds. Westoll set out to paint all of the more than 10,300 ornithological species catalogued according to Edward Crisford's taxonomically revolutionary *Checklist of the Birds of the World* (1976), with the idea that the pictures could be made up into a book which, if not exactly pocket-sized, would be compact enough to be taken on a bird-watching trip anywhere.

He embarked on this to his family's bemusement, without any outside backing, and without, initially, any real hope of completing it. He occasionally said that if he "lasted" 15 years at a couple of birds a day he might finish it. The illustrations were painted in watercolour on A3 sheets, some pages illustrating fewer than 10 species, others portraying more than 80 "small brown birds" in his children's words, arranged according to ornithological family, and scaled accurately within each family. Gradually the sheets and then the folders began to pile up until, 387 plates and 190 bird families later, the task was complete - or at least until the discovery of new species or the recategorisation of others produced a flurry of revision.

Tim Westoll had an exceptionally happy and fulfilled life. He was essentially a countryman, and his public life was one of quiet and often unsung public service - he was chairman of Cumberland County Council, and then Cumbria County Council, for 17 years. He was lucky to have had the means, energy and leisure to pursue a host of interests. A friend said he had never met a man better prepared for retirement, and Westoll productively filled his days with gardening, golf, dogs, shooting, family friends and painting, although there had been racehorses and appearances in Gilbert & Sullivan operas before that. He was born James Westoll, but known since childhood as Tim, into a Sunderland shipping family in 1918. The following year his father bought a small sporting estate in Cumberland on the "debatable land" north of the Border Esk near the Solway. There Tim was brought up and spent nearly all his life. He began painting studies of birds

when he was a boy. At seven years old he had sent some of them to Archibald Thorburn's dealer, William Embleton, who said, "You will learn a lot from Mr Thorburn's books and pictures and more from what your eyes see out of doors. When you are a man I expect you will be a real good artist."

Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, Westoll joined the Border Regiment in 1939 and spent the early part of the Second World War on the Kent coast. There he met Jane, youngest daughter of Sir Fairfax Luxmoore, a Lord Justice of Appeal, whom he was to marry in 1946. His battalion was later absorbed into the 15th Scottish Division, which played an important part in the D-Day landings (a champagne bottle with a signed message from him and fellow officers was thrown overboard during the Channel crossing, washed up on the Isle of Wight and is now in the Border Regiment Museum in Carlisle) and the liberation of Europe northwards to the Baltic coast. He ended the war with the rank of major and a mention in despatches.

Afterwards he was involved with family shipping interests until these were sold in the Fifties, and he was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. Although he flirted with the idea of opening a chancery chambers in Carlisle he never practised. But he was a Deputy Chairman of Cumberland Quarter Sessions for 11 years until 1971.

As chairman of the county council from 1968, his local government work was resolutely non-partisan, and he always stood as an Independent, believing there was little place for party lines in the management of such matters as roads and the police. He considered the fight for Ullswater his most important achievement. In 1965 the Manchester Water Authority applied to extract water from Ullswater, which would have

The idea was to make a book which, if not exactly pocket-sized, would be compact enough to be taken on a bird-watching trip anywhere



Westoll illustrated all 10,300 ornithological species Don McPhee

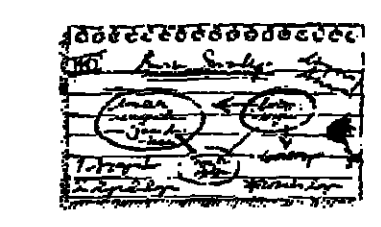
changed the character of the landscape for ever. A great battle ensued, and was pursued to the House of Lords. Ullswater was saved, an early example of victory for the environmental lobby. A fair-minded, unsmug man, he was much saddened when the new Cumbria authority became more divided along party-political lines, and he felt the happy working atmosphere had soured.

Westoll was High Sheriff of Cumberland in 1984, a Deputy Lieutenant of Cumbria and county president of the St John Ambulance Brigade; he was made a KStJ in 1983. He was devoted to, and actively involved in, the Clothworkers' Company, 12th in rank of the great City of London livery companies, and was its Master in 1983-84. Leeds University, whose Department of Textiles is largely funded by the Clothworkers, honoured him in 1984 with an LL.D. His other Cumbrian interests included the chairmanship of Carlisle racecourse and di-

rectorship of Cumberland Newspapers and a share in the Border Garden Centre. He played the organ every Sunday at Kirkcubright-on-Esk and indeed had done so on the morning of his death.

Tim Westoll was a charming, humorous, modest, tolerant and generous man who took great pleasure and a proper pride in every aspect of his life. He was most happily married for 52 years, a wonderful father to his four children, an adored grandfather and a good friend to many.

James Westoll, ornithologist, landowner and public servant: born High Coniscliffe, Co Durham 26 July 1918; called to the Bar, Lincoln's Inn 1952; Chairman, Cumberland County Council 1959-74; Chairman, Cumbria County Council 1973-76; married 1946 Jane Luxmoore (two sons, two daughters); died Longtown, Cumbria 7 February 1999.



BUSINESS NOTES ROBERT BALDOCK

Big questions posed by MarketWatch.com

THE BUSINESS world today seems short on certainties. Who could have imagined that an unknown company called MarketWatch.com would be valued in January this year at over \$1bn on the first day its shares were traded on Wall Street, and then be talked about as a rival to the mighty Dow Jones and NBC? Twice the value of Courtland's and Coats Viyella put together for a business that is less than two years old and has never made a profit?

Even relatively established businesses can do some funny things these days. Take Microsoft: the American software firm has recently gone into the home removal business. In partnership with a real-estate company, a removals firm and a financial services group, it is helping people with what is one of their most stressful experiences - moving house.

Unpredictable things like this are cropping up all over the place, and businessmen can be excused if they feel uncomfortable with them. How can they hope to plan for the future if newcomers are able to gouge great chunks out of their markets overnight, and if old-timers can ally (virtually) with virtually anyone on the face of the earth in order to start doing something completely different?

Businessmen need a framework through which they can think about the possibilities presented by this

fast-changing world I should like to posit a framework which starts by taking a step back and identifying two major forces behind some of the most dramatic upheavals in the business world today. The first is the changing demand of consumers. The big question here for the future is, will consumers want more and more competitively priced products, choosing from goods laid out on shelves for them to compare? Or will they increasingly seek to be involved in producing products that meet their needs, in finding solutions to their problems?

The second is generated by suppliers. They are made to decide whether to be generalists - involved in every link in the chain of processes that converts raw materials into finished products and services - or whether to be specialists concentrating on one particular link in that chain. Can we expect companies in the future to be categorised by the things that they produce (cars or soap powder, for instance, as in the past) or by where they operate in the value chain (as packagers or designers)?

The different combinations of these two forces provide four possible future scenarios for the future: a future in which consumers invite global companies to satisfy their individual needs; a future where vast diversified conglomerates try to "own" customers and satisfy a broad

range of needs; a future where price is the key influence on customers and all products are like commodities; and, finally, a future where teams of global specialists come together to offer standardised products in crowded price-driven markets.

In addition there is a fifth and final scenario, a wild card that falls quite outside the parameters shaping the other four. It arises from imagining a complete disaster, a situation in which the world economy is in chaos. Consumers, as we know them, all but disappear, and in their place remain a few lucky "survivors".

Which of these scenarios seems the most likely to unfold? For a start, despite the economic disasters of the past 18 months, it's unlikely consumers are about to disappear. There is, however, considerable significance in developments like those at MarketWatch.com and Microsoft, developments which point strongly in the direction of the first scenario where global companies are invited to satisfy individual needs.

Whatever the case, companies must consider carefully each scenario. And they should keep a weather eye open for early warning signs suggesting that one scenario rather than another is about to predominate.

Robert Baldock is the author of *Destination Z: the history of the future* (John Wiley, £18.99)

Ena Burrill

FROM THE moment of her birth, which she resolutely asserted took place in a mud hut in Uruguay, the actress Ena Burrill seemed destined to lead a life full of colour and eccentricity.

The daughter of a former internecine in a Boer War concentration camp, she was educated in South Africa, at Springfield Convent, Wynberg, and the University of Cape Town. She made her first appearance on the stage in 1928, in John Galsworthy's *Silver Box* at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, north London. She was next seen, in the West End (Wyndham's, 1929), as the maid in *Lying Together*, a vehicle for the matinee idol Owen Nares.

In the following year she was chosen by C.B. Cochran to be one of his "Young Ladies" in his favourite musical comedy, *Rodgers and Hart's Ever Green*. Although she appeared in two further musicals, Ivor Novello's *Crest of the Wave* (Drury Lane, 1937) and *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Sunny River* (Piccadilly, 1943), the main thrust of her career over the next 20 years was towards serious theatre.

During this time she was rarely off the West End stage. Notable successes included Raymond Massey's production of *Worse Things Happen at Sea* (St James's, 1935); Naomi opposite John



Ends never did meet

Gielgud in André Obey's *Noah* (New 1935); the Fortune Teller in Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, produced by Laurence Olivier with his wife Vivien Leigh in the lead (Phoenix, 1945, and Piccadilly, 1946); and as a temperamental leading lady in Novello's last play *We Proudly Present* (Duke of York's, 1947).

Between her many London appearances she contrived to drive an ambulance in the Spanish Civil War and to play two long repertory seasons, in the early 1930s and 1940s, at the Liverpool Play-

house. In the first of these she elicited from the youthful Michael Redgrave the comment that, although haphazard in rehearsal, once she walked on the stage she could "command an audience's attention by the sheer force of her personality". She was later to appear with him in the long-running *Uncle Harry* (Garrick, 1944) and in *Macbeth* (Aldwych, 1947). Sadly, Redgrave's manipulative direction ensured that the impact of her *Lady Macbeth* was blunted.

In wartime Liverpool she was invited to take tea on a destroyer commanded by Miles Child, who became her husband in 1941. The war over, in April 1946 she crossed the Atlantic with the Old Vic Company. She made her New York debut as *Mistress Quickly* in *Henry IV Part 1* and also performed in *Oedipus*, *The Cretan* and *Arms and the Man*.

Meanwhile, on her husband's retirement from the Navy at the end of the war, they leased Boarstall Tower near Brill, in Buckinghamshire, and began farming. Despite their unremitting efforts this venture proved unsuccessful, and to make ends meet she continued to act, as one of the leading players alongside John Wynnard, Godfrey Tearle, Robert Helpmann and Anthony Quayle in Sir Barry Jackson's 1948 season at Stratford.

After milking, it was a case of off with the wellies, on with the make-up and then off by car to the Bard. Petrol was still rationed and it was her proud boast that she owed petrol coupons to every garage between Aylesbury and Stratford. But ends never did meet and their difficulties caused the break-up of their marriage, after which audiences were to see her only once more, in Peter Hall's 1956 West End production of *Gigi*.

Her love of animals led to her renting a cottage and 20 acres near Carfaxham, on Bodmin Moor. There, for over 30 years, with redoubtable independence of spirit and in the company of her cats, she kept a few cattle, which she treated as her children. Latterly, while crippled by arthritis, she was sustained from afar by a loving niece and locally by splendid neighbours, until she suffered a fall and, with a final dramatic flourish, was air-lifted to Treleas Hospital, where she took her final curtain. She is survived by her last two, very old cows.

Ena Burrill, actress and farmer: born 1903; married 1941 Commander Miles Child (deceased; marriage dissolved); died Truro, Cornwall 9 January 1999.

P. D. ARCULUS

Discount on loss for disclaimed lease

FRIDAY LAW REPORT 12 FEBRUARY 1999

Re Park Air Services
Christopher Moran
Holdings Ltd v
Bairstow and another;
House of Lords
(Lord Slynn of
Hadley, Lord Lloyd
of Berwick, Lord Hope
of Craighead, Lord
Hobhouse of
Woodborough,
Lord Millett)
4 February 1999

WHERE A liquidator disclaimed a lease under section 178 of the Insolvency Act 1986 and the landlord proved for his loss in the winding up, the amount proved should be discounted for accelerated receipt.

The House of Lords allowed the appeal of liquidators against the decision of the Court of Appeal that compensation payable for a disclaimed lease should not be discounted for accelerated receipt.

The landlord granted a lease for a term of 25 years with rent payable quarterly in advance to a company which subsequently entered into members' voluntary liquidation. The liquidators gave notice to the landlord under section 178(2) of the Insolvency Act 1986 disclaiming the lease. That entitled the landlord to prove in the winding up for any loss or damage which it had sustained in consequence of the operation of the disclaimer.

The landlord duly submitted a proof of debt for a sum representing the difference between the amounts which would have been receivable under the lease for the residue of the term if there had been no disclaimer, and the amounts which the landlord would have been likely to receive on a notional reletting or series of relettings for a similar term after the disclaimer. Those amounts were calculated without any discount for accelerated receipt.

The liquidators rejected the proof on the ground that there should have been a discount for accelerated receipt, and the landlord appealed to the High Court. The judge upheld the

liquidators' contention, and the Court of Appeal allowed the landlord's appeal.

Jonathan Sumption QC and Richard Adams QC (Lawrence Graham) for the liquidators; Terence Eborson QC and Peter Griffiths (Memery Crystal) for the landlord.

Lord Millett said that the office-holder's right to disclaim onerous property was currently contained in section 178 of the Insolvency Act 1986. It had long been recognised that the effect of the disclaimer of a lease was to extinguish the lease as between the landlord and the tenant, with the result that the landlord's reversion was accelerated. That was because section 178 expressly provided that the tenant's rights and liabilities, including its right to possession and liability to pay rent, were determined.

The landlord could not, therefore, prove for future rent, but section 178 gave him the immediate right to prove for the loss or damage he had sustained in consequence of the operation of the disclaimer.

It had always been recognised that the right to compensation under section 178 must be assessed in the same way as damages. There was no justification for employing an approach different from that in a case of breach of a contract which had been wrongfully terminated, where allowance would have to be made for accelerated receipt of any sums which had not fallen due at the date of the breach.

It followed that the premises on which the judgment of the Court of Appeal had been based, namely that in principle the compensation should be calculated without any discount for early receipt, and that a discount should not be imposed unless it was required by the 1986 Act, the Insolvency Rules 1986, or the authorities, could not be accepted.

The Court of Appeal had wrongly regarded the landlord as a secured creditor within the meaning of section 248 of the 1986 Act, and had then applied rule 11.13(5) of the Insolvency Rules, which was concerned with the proof of debts payable at a future time, to its proof of debt. The right to compensation under section 178 was not a right to future payment. The claim remained to be quantified, but subject thereto was a present right to immediate payment.

KATE O'HANLON
Barrister

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

SMALL: Sir Ashley, politician & barrister, aged 85, died peacefully on 10 February in Trinity Hospice after a short illness. Husband of Gery, father of Christopher, Richard and Anthony, brother of Dwin. His passing is a grievous loss to his family and friends. Cremation on Monday 15 February at 1.30pm at West London Crematorium, Harrow Road, W10. Flowers to Chelsea Funeral Directors, 91 Rochester Row, SW1P 1LJ. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

BIRTHDAYS

Admiral Sir Peter Abbott, Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff, 57; Professor Arnold Beckett, pharmacist, 79; Miss Annette Crosbie, actress, 65; Dr Kenneth Edwards, Vice-Chancellor, Leicester University, 65; Lord Greene of Harrow Weald, former trade union leader, 88; Lord Hamlyn, publisher, 78; Miss Christine Hancock, General Secretary, Royal College of Nursing, 56; Mr Anthony Howard, journalist, 65; Mr Simon MacCorkindale, actor, 47; Sir Robin Mackworth Young, Librarian Emeritus to the Queen, 79; Lord Morrison, a

former Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 68; Lord Moyola, former Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 76; Mr Peter Snape MP, 57; The Hon Nicholas Soames MP, 51; Mr Peter Temple-Morris MP, 61; Lord Wigoder QC, 78.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Charles Darwin, naturalist, 1809. Deaths: Lady Jane Grey, Queen for nine days, executed 1553. On this day, the London County Council was formed, 1889. Today is the Feast Day of St Antony Kauleas, St Ethelwald of Lindisfarne,

St Julian the Hospitaller, St Ludan, St Marina or Pelagia and St Meletius.

SYNAGOGUE SERVICES

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 4.55pm.

United Synagogues: 0181-243 8089. Federation of Synagogues: 0181-202 2283. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-586 1053. Reform Synagogues of Great Britain: 0181-249 7321. Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 0171-259 2573. New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-328 1026.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Prince of Wales, Patron, Macmillan Cancer Relief, visits the Macmillan Day Care Unit at the Alfred Evans Memorial Hospital, Driffield, Humberside, and opens the Macmillan Wards Unit, Bridlington and District Hospital, Bridlington, Humberside. The Princess Royal visits Bristol Port Company, Avonmouth, Bristol; and opens the new Out-Patients department at Clevedon Cottage Hospital, Clevedon, Somerset.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; No 7 Company Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

WORDS CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE

spirit, n. and v.

DEATH AFTER chick-pea mixture (10). Spotlight on Vesuvius (4.4). My propensity to pun makes me wonder whether a whole new career could open up in setting crosswords.

Stephen Sondheim gives me lessons, at a reasonable rate, but these would cost you more, for the volume which collects those

takes is inexhaustible patience, limitless time and an eccentric mind," he asserts. As he notes, by way of example: Ekyl alcohol is one way to kill a fish if you listen closely (6). Spirit - say it aloud, slowly. Simple when you know how. Sondheim gets far more fiendish than that. As for me: posthumous; lava lamp.

JUST AS communities apparently pulled together during the blitz, at Selhurst Park on Saturday supporters of Crystal Palace football club remained plucky and dogged during gruelling times. Maybe the same myths will go around, and in 50 years' time people will say, "The Queen Mother, God bless her, went to every match of the season".

The problem is that the new chairman and Terry Venables sold off almost the entire team, and Venables left recently, amid financial controversy. Terry Venables in financial controversy eh? Who'd have thought it?

When the chairman begged him to take over, Venables must have been in a bit of a mood. He said in *The Fast Show*, saying "No, you don't want to leave me in charge. 'Cos I'm a little bit tucky you see, I'm a little bit wey-hey, I'll fog your club and turn it into a scrap-metal yard".

Being a season-ticket holder at an all-seat football ground is like living on a housing estate. At the start of the season you move into your allotted seat, with no idea who your neighbours will be. You exchange pleasantries, like "That was close," and "You've

dropped yer programme mate" – the equivalent of "Chilly today isn't it?" Then the supporters reveal themselves at their most emotional in front of these strangers. Which is also similar to housing estates, where you hear every movement of the nearest neighbours through the walls. So the only things you know about the bloke at number 12 is that he always leaves for work at 10 past eight, and that during sex he yells "Get on up, take me to the bridge".

On a Saturday everyone remained at their post. On my left was a baldpate man, who sits through every match wearing a nightgown and looking for any contraband on his seat that make him look like a BBC announcer broadcasting to occupied France. A minute after kick-off he starts relaying the scores. "Oo Bristol Rovers are one up," he'll bellow with great enthusiasm. Then a few seconds later, "Well, well, Crewe are losing again," informing the vicinity of every goal throughout the football league, while no one takes any notice whatsoever.

After a while this background becomes quite endearing, like

the ramblings of David Helfgott, that pianist featured in *Shine*. On Saturday, as an experiment, in the toilet during half-time I asked him how Darlington were getting on. They were losing one-nil, the last he'd heard.

A few rows back was fag man, never without a half-smoked ciggy that he thrusts violently sideways with every fourth syllable, which is pronounced twice as loudly as the other three in the sequence when he yells advice. For example, "Palace don't LET yourself get BEAT by these wankERS!"

During one of last year's many three-nil defeats, fag man began screaming at the disgruntled fans who were leaving. "Where are you GOING, you xxxxx. DON'T leave you daft. XXXXXX." A couple of minutes later I looked behind, and he'd gone.

There was the one who once sat behind me, chattering throughout about sweeper systems and moving someone from midfield to wing-back, all the rubbish that no true football fan has a clue about. This carried on for half an hour, with no contribution from whoever he was talking to. So I looked back.



ON LOCATION

and saw that he was talking to a girl who I presumed was his daughter, and can't possibly have been older than five.

And there was the woman whose sole purpose in life must be to confuse liberals. A section of the crowd had been criticising one of Palace's own black players. "You're only having a go at him because he's black," she screamed in inspiring defiance. I don't think her allegations were true, but none the less it was an impressive speech. Then, before she sat down, she led a chant at the opposing goalkeeper of, "Dodgy keeper, dodgy keeper, takes it up the arse."

None the less, several thousand people with nothing in common share the emotions of an afternoon, through a sense of shared identity. But, deep down, most people know it's ridiculous. Spurs fans, for example, don't really hate Arsenal fans; they just wish they did. Fans go to the game with friends who support the opposing team. At opposite ends of the ground, they scream obscenities at each other; wince "Oh no," as their friends shriek "Yes come on" and vice versa, then meet up afterwards and continue their friendly conversations where they left off.

Unlike what happens at international matches, no one can claim that victory proves your area is superior to theirs. But the misery of defeat has to be real, in order to appreciate the fleeting moments of success – which makes supporting a team like Palace a fully rounded experience, unlike the shallow and unfulfilling formality of following someone like Chelsea.

It's so much more fun to sing "We're by far the greatest team the world has ever seen", knowing that when Pele or George Best discusses this

question, it's unlikely they say "Emmum, possibly the 1960 Real Madrid team? Or perhaps the current Crystal Palace side, 14th in the Nationwide League?" How far down the league can you still find this song? Are there teams in divisions called the Ever Ready Battery Conference, with 25 supporters singing "Chalfont St Latimer Solicitors FC, we're by far the greatest team the world has ever seen?"

Like anything which is supposed to make us feel all in it together, supporting a football club can have the opposite effect. Despite the cliché about football having been a middle class, even the fashionable clubs the supporters are drawn from the same backgrounds as ever. What has changed is that the potential profits now attract the biggest businessmen. So players are bought and sold not as part of a footballing strategy, but as assets for short-term gain, like a multinational trading on the markets.

So a club like Palace balances between old and new business methods. Corporate sponsorship is attracted, but its most visible form is conically tacky. The holder of the programme with

the lucky number wins a try at the Mitsubishi half-time challenge. A board is erected over the bottom half of the goal and, to win a car, the supporter has to kick three balls into the gap, one of them from the centre circle. In other words, if you succeeded you wouldn't need the car, as Alex Ferguson would buy you for 20 million quid. And special offers are sent direct to supporters' homes. The latest boasted "A free cup of coffee". This would be available, as long as you showed the voucher, only at the match against Barnsley, and only at half-time.

But all that was forgotten on Saturday when, with the last kick of the game, Birmingham's Gary Rowlett struck a magnificent 20-yard swirling lob into his own goal, for Palace to equalise. Headphones man and fan man, and thousands of others who sit squashed together once a fortnight, cheered with delight and howled with laughter, their weekend saved. To the right were a crowd of disbelieving Birmingham fans and to the left a stunning magenta sunset, glowing over south-west London, but nobody cared about either.

Paul Adu offers exorcisms at a flat rate of £150 at his 'personal temple' in north London

Tom Craig

Off a drab main road in Tottenham, north London, Paul Adu conducts business from a small back office. As befits a businessman, he wears a smart suit and a rather nice tie, and he monitors the front shop via the CCTV screen installed in the corner.

But the ordinariness ends there. His desk is decorated with a large magic circle. Its red and black symbols, he reveals matter-of-factly, are splattered with dove's blood – to protect against evil – and small, regular hillocks of wax from a ring of dripping candles.

The office is strewn with ouija boards, tarot cards and an unnerving little brass skull. Two "magic wands" lie on the table and a red, hooded robe hanging in the corner suggests that Mr Adu occasionally slips out of his suit into something more comfortable.

The oddness continues in the front of the New Guardian Light shop, with a bewildering array of paraphernalia associ-

spected Maudsley psychiatric hospital in south London is not immediately obvious. But researchers may soon be beating a path to the doors of outfalls like this. For the Maudsley has secured £115,000 from the Government to investigate why black people take so long to seek NHS treatment for mental health problems. Edwin Gwenz, a research fellow at the hospital, is charged with testing the specific hypothesis that black people turn first to alternative medicine - including traditional African healing, voodoo and witchcraft.

With a disproportionate number of black people in psychiatric care in Britain, and a particularly large number diagnosed as schizophrenic, there is already bitter controversy over whether mental health statistics reflect real rates of black mental illness, or the system's racial prejudice. The suggestion that blacks may be attending traditional healers in significant numbers (the proposition is even more insulting to blacks if the more culturally loaded term "witch

he says. "My clients just ended up sleeping all the time."

"I try to establish if a person's disturbance is connected to (illegal) drugs or to voodoo or some bad spell," he says earnestly. He offers exorcism all at a flat rate of £150 at his "personal temple", at a nearby but secret location specially cleansed and blessed by him. After he "compels" the bad spirit out of a client - it can take hours of incantations and chants - he throws in a personal guiding spirit to protect the newly healed from further harm. "You do not wash a plate and then leave it out to get dirty again," he says.

Dr Trevor Turner, a consultant psychiatrist in Hackney, east London, says that there is no doubt that black patients present themselves late to the NHS, often when their condition is already chronic. Sometimes, cultural misunderstanding is partly to blame, he says. He remembers a patient who came into NHS care only two years after he'd begun calling himself the King of Hackney. The man, a Rastafarian, answers to the

first seek out counsellors and homepaths - and even feng shui experts, to come round and rearrange the furniture to unblock thwarted energy.

But that does not comfort those who believe Mr Gwenz's hypothesis is a diversion. Dr David Ndegwa, a forensic psychiatrist in Lambeth, south London, suspects that black aversion to NHS therapy may have a simpler cause - sheer terror of what the mental health system does to blacks. The reality of mental hospitals in London and other inner cities, he says, is "locked wards full of black people supervised by white doctors".

"It is a brave black man who goes to his white GP and tells him he has a mental health problem," says Dr Ndegwa. For the statistics show that black patients are more likely to be coerced into hospital, to be diagnosed as schizophrenic and thereafter to be more heavily drugged than whites. Dr Ndegwa claims that misclassification is to blame for the disproportionate numbers of "schizophrenic" blacks.

Black patients are more likely to be coerced into hospital, diagnosed as schizophrenic and heavily drugged

doctor" figures) promises to add more gunpowder to an already explosive mix.

Though Mr Gwezi claims that animism of African and Afro-Caribbean descent there is widespread belief in supernatural powers, and a strong conviction that mental illness is caused by bad spirits, no one knows how many blacks use traditional bowlers or witch doctors, or how common such services are in Britain.

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The problem with hospitals, he insists, is that they ignore the spiritual dimension to mental illness.

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slipped through the mental health net because professionals left too much to cultural difference. His schizophrenia became a problem only when he — understandably, as the King of Hackney — refused to pay his rent.

But Dr Turner says evidence regularly surfaces that belief systems — sometimes encompassing witchcraft and intense evangelical Christianity — also contribute to the delay in seeking conventional medical help. "About four years ago we had a patient brought to us in chains," he says. "Apparently he had been chained to a church altar during some sort of exorcism." An exorcism has even been performed on the ward. "The patient got better afterwards," he says. "But the improvement also coincided with the drugs kicking in."

Dr Turner welcomes the Maudsley study but would also be interested in an investigation into all pathways to the psychiatric ward, whether patients are black or white. For all sections of the community, he says, psychiatric services are a last resort, though delays among blacks are admittedly longest.

For whites who may squiggle at blacks seeking comfort in traditional healers, he and other psychiatrists say they are not that different from disturbed middle-class whites who

says, have lead blacks to develop their own networks, the chief of which is the church.

Mr Ndegwu does not say that black people do not attend traditional healers. "I knew some of my patients were seeing these people, but it is a difficult thing to confirm," he says. "It is a very secret world." But he says he will be highly surprised if the Maudsley study concludes that voodoo and witchcraft are being widely used as alternatives to the NHS.

Angela, a young black woman who prefers to remain anonymous, says that blacks with mental health problems are terrified of the NHS. But, she says, they generally place their faith in God, not voodoo.

A few years ago her boyfriend was prescribed heavy medication by his GP after complaining of anxiety. No counselling was ever offered. She persuaded him to throw away the tablets and turn to his church. One year and many prayer sessions later, he was better. Many young black men, she says, suffer mental distress because of unemployment and racial discrimination.

Trevor Minto, who runs a mental-health support group in Essall Heath, Birmingham agrees. "Distrust is the main reason for the delay in seeking NHS help," he says. "Black people just know they are going to be treated badly."

Legal Notices

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ME 4166(1)
MECHANICAL REPAIRS
INSTALLATIONS
(LONDON) LIMITED
 151 Trafalgar Road, Greenwich,
 London SE20 9JZ

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the last known whereabouts of the partner of the late Francis Associates, Contact House, 26 London Road, London SE10 2TF was appointed Liquidator of Mechanicaal Repairs Installations (London) Limited in Liquidation on 4 February 1999.

No creditors who have and claims due to or against the company are to be presented to the last known whereabouts of the partner of the late Francis Associates, Contact House, 26 London Road, London SE10 2TF was appointed Liquidator of Mechanicaal Repairs Installations (London) Limited in Liquidation on 4 February 1999.

24th February 1999
1 FRENCH JAGUARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE INVENTORY ACT 1986 AND
IN THE MATTER OF
FRYER & BARNES MEATS
LIMITED
 IN LIQUIDATION

Company Number: 3236662

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 61 of the Inventory Act 1986 that a copy of the creditors of the above company will be held at Kingston House 48 Cornhill Road, London EC1M 4AD on 24th February 1999 at 11.30am for the purpose of the Inventory Act 1986.

24th February 1999
By Order of the Board
G PETER DAVIES

FIRNAD LIMITED
STANDILL LIMITED
 between a body of persons known as Section 41 of the Inventory Act 1986, that a statement of the creditors of the above company will be held at Kingston House 48 Cornhill Road, London EC1M 4AD on 24th February 1999 at 11.30am for the purpose of the Inventory Act 1986.

24th February 1999
STEPHEN JOHN AGAGROG
 Joint Administration Receiver

THE INVENTORY ACT 1986
N.S. NATIONAL SIGNS LIMITED
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 61 of the Inventory Act 1986 that a meeting of the creditors of the above company will be held at 24th February 1999 at 11.30am for the purpose of the Inventory Act 1986.

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By Order of the Board
R. A. RAPHAEL, Director

THE INSOLVENCY ACT AND RULES 1986
HOLLYBUSH LIMITED
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24th February 1999
By Order of the Board
R. A. RAPHAEL, Director

THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986
WARDROBE FOR LADIES
LIMITED
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 61 of the Inventory Act 1986 that a meeting of the creditors of the above company will be held at Kingston House 48 Cornhill Road, London EC1M 4AD on 24th February 1999 at 11.30am for the purpose of the Inventory Act 1986.

24th February 1999
By Order of the Board
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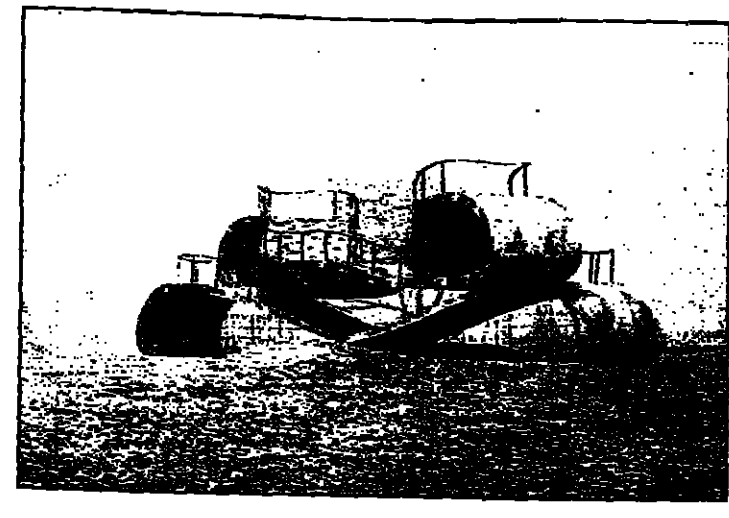
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Foreign Office is a radical new architectural duo that is going underground to change the shape of our cities. By Nonie Niesewand



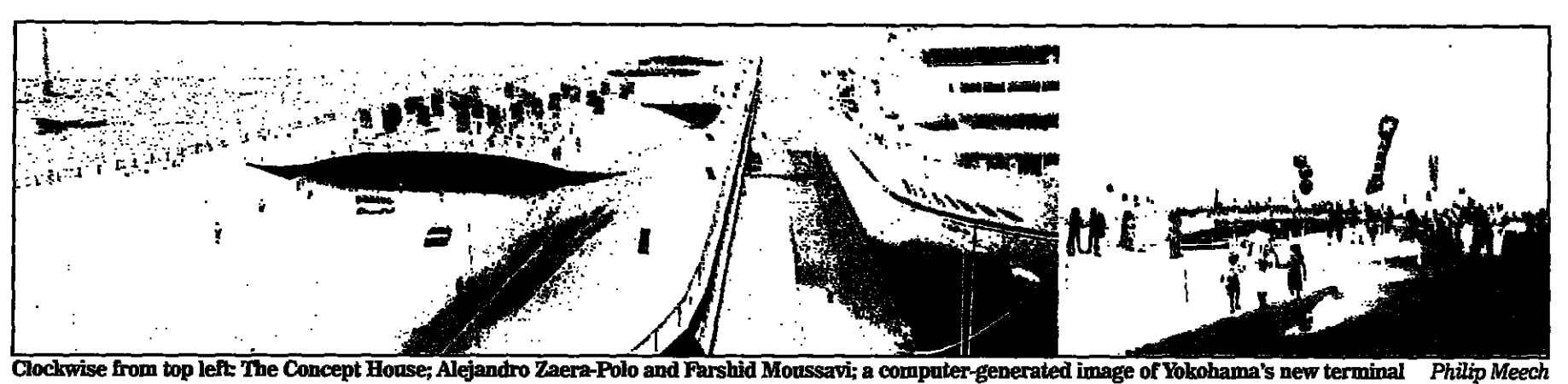
Mussels, snails and ferry tales

Outside their most recent building, the Belgio restaurant in Notting Hill, the London-based architectural duo Foreign Office undiplomatically describe their company name as "nothing to do with embassies - a kind of joke". Spanish architect Alejandro Zaera-Polo, 36 and Iranian born Farshid Moussavi, 34, feel "biographically displaced" from their cultures - "it's more about alienation as a creative force", Farshid explains: "A foreigner is less bound by conventions, more experimental."

Belgio is the noisy, hearty restaurant chain that put Flemish food on the map, with mussels and sausages and specialist beers on tap. The first branch opened in a north London basement in the 1980s, with concrete walls and waiters dressed as monks. The only thing that stopped Belgio being twee was the architecture.

Foreign Office have also done the chain's Bristol branch, one in New York and the latest, to open next month in Ladbrooke Grove, west London - all on the strength of a simple concept, literally a piece of sheet metal bent into a structural shell. Like all FO concepts, the basic idea hasn't altered much despite the different constraints of the sites.

The new Belgio shelters under a steel-vaulted roof shaped like a



Clockwise from top left: The Concept House; Alejandro Zaera-Polo and Farshid Moussavi; a computer-generated image of Yokohama's new terminal Philip Meech

muschel shell. It has a narrow frontage, less than 5m wide but very tall, and the slim corridor unexpectedly opens up into a huge space beneath a barrel-vaulted roof more snail than mussel.

"Our work breaks down complex geometries into identifiable basic bits of varied components. Simple. Take the arch. Then make six of them, each on a different radius, assemble them and you get a complex final form," Farshid explains.

In Seoul, Korea, on an inconsistent and incoherent street-plan anchored by a Catholic church at the centre, Foreign Office imposed order with a huge rail terminus that fans out below ground, using these arches on different radii. Below ground, they soar overhead, with the plaza on top - which is a novel way of getting people to walk on the roof.

"Why not walk on the roof, shielded from the wind?" Farshid is insistent that different topography encourages different forms of use. They call their buildings topography - we'd call them cinema complexes, termini or ferries.

So when their Japanese client for a new pier at Yokohama harbour began to complain that their wasteful, cavernous underground curves ate into the world's most expensive real estate, they suggested alternative ways to use the space. Like a traditional tea-house where everyone sits on tatami. Or the stacking

hotel beds pioneered by the Japanese. They have reversed the order of modern architecture where form follows function, to make the function fit the form.

Simple outlines of their plans and elevations show how they get movement into their buildings. A curvaceous fold in a sheet of paper turns into a "Concept House" that breaks all the norms. Call it a bulldog clip, or skins of wool in outline, but the floors are flat and inside it feels like a cocoon. A cinema complex in Tehran appears, in elevation, like spools of film looped and cradled so that pod-like theatres intertwine with access ramps. The high-speed train terminal they designed in South Korea, where the rail lines cut the city adrift from the waterfront,

changed the position of the track to breach the divide "like fingers".

When the Royal College of Art in London opened an architectural debate on building for the future ("Utopia"), a lecture on the Foreign Office projects, given by Alejandro Zaera-Polo, began unprepossessingly with images of urban landscapes from around the world. Is Utopia really full of parking-lots, concrete blocks framed by flyovers, and high-rise housing in low visibility landscapes? Gotham City, fragmented into shards of light at night, carved up by six-lane highways in different directions, intersected by road and rail and tangled in spaghetti junctions with motorway bridges?

Foreign Office actually like this realistic canvas. They see the possibility to change landscapes and make the fragmented cities cohesive with interesting buildings. "Utopia doesn't exist. It's the dynamics that interest us," Alejandro says.

For the new breed of architects, urban sleaze offers an opportunity to practice a new type of architecture, one that can bring lungs to the heart of a city. Foreign Office's big public spaces don't make impact upon the cityscape so much as unite different parts of the city. Above the waterfront at Yokohama, the vent-like gill alongside the moored boats is the only visible sign of a pier that is capable of feeding 8,000 people on to ferries in the rush hour.

Urban regeneration is the buzzphrase. Foreign Office, who see themselves as cartographers changing

the topography of inner cities, are at the heart of a new movement.

Players of the computer game SimCity begin with topography to realise Utopian visions of the "perfect city". Around the mountains, valleys and lakes are strategically placed harbours, airports, road and rail infrastructures, power stations and a waterworks. Get the balance wrong in this game and the city breaks down. And, just like SimCity addicts, Foreign Office see the city as a playground (but have to work within real-time constraints). So, rather than add to congestion with rigid, monolithic structures, their shell-like buildings mostly go down, not up. You won't find any skyscrapers in their portfolio - too rigid. Foreign Office believe change is more important than permanence: change to suit the needs of city dwellers.

Their buildings have to be crash-free to cope with huge crowds of people. Yokohama International Ferry Terminal is a £150m project involving a 17,000m² passenger-handling zone. In Seoul, it was the terminus fire-escape that brought energy into the building. In the 8m-wide street below ground, 8,000 people, in rush hour, had to be able to escape through the plaza. So the building evolved along this street, carved out of the hill.

Unsurprisingly, Foreign Office are included in the directory, *New Young British Architects* that the Foreign & Commonwealth Office hands out at trade fairs and embassies all around the world.

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The director of the cult movies *Absolute Beginners* and *Earth Girls are Easy* talks about his new film *Vigo*. Inspired by the work of the visionary French film-maker Jean Vigo, the film is a passionate portrayal of his life.

Questions and answers will be followed by a special preview of the film *Vigo* which precedes its theatrical release in the UK in the Spring.

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CREATIVE REVIEW
THE MILL

What did you do in the war, auntie?

Tanya Harrod's definitive book on British crafts highlights a generation of unsung female talent

IT WOULD be difficult to think of a subject with a more fragile and compromised identity than the crafts. When I embarked on my book on crafts in Britain this century, I described it to friends as "a sort of wide-ranging social history, a remapping of visual culture".

But the word "craft" would already have had its electrifyingly negative effect: "The crafts - you mean macramé and that kind of thing." Further explanations - that the book showed how the crafts were bearers of dreams and ideals, standing for variously English modernism, an arcadian, de-industrialised England, democracy in all the arts and post-war contacts with advanced art in Continental Europe - would fade on the air.

In the book, I chose to watch the crafts over the century, as they endlessly redefined themselves, and redefined their various practices in relation to fine art, design, modernism, education, patterns of consumption, class, politics and all sorts of currents in social and cultural history.

Craft could encompass blind ex-servicemen making nets just after the First World War at the workshops set up by the charity St Dunstan's, miners' wives in the Rhondda Valley making quilts under the aegis of the Rural Industries Bureau in the Depression, and hand-block-printed textiles designed and made by Phyllis Barron for the Duke of Westminster's yacht, *Flying Cloud*, in the early 1920s. Any definition of

craft could also take in handwork in industry and vernacular craft such as hurdle-making or basketry. After the Second World War the situation becomes more complex.

One of the most captivating themes which emerged is the relationship of the crafts to English modernism and feminism between the wars. In England, creative men and women alike subscribed to an adaptation of Continental modernism and, in terms of this English modernism, hand-block-printed textiles, highly textured weaving and austere stoneware pots belonged to the most adventurous end of the design world in the 1920s. In the area of textiles in particular, women were the pioneers and they belong to a forgotten history of modernism dominated by women.

The crafts provided an important creative space and income for women in general. The major gain in the early part of the century - the admission to the franchise - led to few other advances for women. The proportion in the professions moved very little; no higher in the 1950s than it had been in 1914. The crafts operated for women as a "third space" between the better defined activities of fine art and design.

Not surprisingly, a marked number of inter-war women makers never married. Many made their lives with other women, devotedly. They formed strong networks, with each other and with women patrons and retailers. Wealthy women

like Margaret Pilkington and Dorothy Elmshirst created opportunities - in Elmshirst's case by commissioning work, and in Pilkington's case through involvement in exhibiting societies and, above all, through her creation of the Red Rose Guild of Artworkers in 1921. The main retail outlets for the inter-war craft were run by women.

But an unmarried status has consequences. It is striking how few letters and archives associated with inter-war women makers survive. The papers of figures like Michael Cardew, Eric Gill, Bernard Leach, like those of male artists, designers and architects, were carefully preserved by their wives and children. But the nieces and nephews of many women makers saw no reason to honour the memory of an eccentric deceased aunt who wove, or made pots or stained-glass windows.

All we have are fragments - like Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie and Nora Braden's more intimate letters to Bernard Leach with their records of tips between lovers, visits to exhibitions and battles with materials. What we can discover of the untrammelled, buoyant lives of these women - financially independent, creative, cultivated - suggests that the special freedom conferred by staying outside the conventionalities of marriage was central to their creativity.

Inscribed in the activities of these inter-war women modernists are stories of liberation. Take Elizabeth Peacock. She had remained a semi-invalid at

home until the age of 36, when she suddenly defied her family and joined Ethel Mairet's first textile weaving workshop at Shottery in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1916.

Peacock moved with Mairet to Ditchling, and found a lifelong companion in Molly Stobart, the daughter of a local landowner. By 1922 Molly's family had built them a home, "Weavers", and provided a smallholding at Clayton under

the South Downs, with Peacock's brother contributing a workshop. She became quietly famous. King Faisal of Egypt bought her lengths of hand-woven cotton. Her shawls and dress lengths were bought by Elsa Schiaparelli. She was also ambitious artistically; the sequence of eight monumental banners commissioned by Dorothy Elmshirst for the utopian community at Dartington Hall, woven from 1930 until

1938, suggest her genius for abstract design on a large scale.

The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century (Yale, £45) is printed on specially made Aberdeen silk paper, launched in Europe with this publication. An exhibition on *British Crafts, 1940-1960, The Pleasures of Peace*, curated by Tanya Harrod, is at the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia, Norwich until 18 April.



Clockwise from top left: work by Lilian Dring, Frances Richards and Constance Howard

SCIENCE

What shall I dream tonight?

We can learn to control our own dreams – as well as deciding when to wake up. By Rita Carter

Late for work? Forget that old excuse about the alarm clock not working – scientists have found that we can probably wake up at any time we like, simply by deciding to do so in advance. Sleep, the embodiment of all that is not conscious, was assumed to be controlled by automatic hormonal mechanisms – known colloquially as the body clock – which are in turn dependent on genes, and on environmental influences such as the length of daylight hours. However, a study carried out at the University of Lübeck, Germany, shows that sleep can also be affected by the conscious brain. In effect this means that we can, if we try hard enough, decide when to wake up.

The researchers split a group of volunteers into two groups and, one nightfall, told one group that they would be allowed six hours' sleep, and the other that they would be allowed nine hours'. As the volunteers slept, the researchers measured their levels of adrenocorticotropin, a stimulating hormone that is released shortly before spontaneous awakening. In both groups the levels of adrenocorticotropin started to rise about an hour before the time they had been told they would have to get up.

The three-hour difference could be explained only by what they had been told when they were awake. This suggests that anticipation – a conscious activity – can pervade sleep and influence bodily mechanisms that were previously thought to be entirely unconscious.

This intertwining of the conscious and unconscious mind has been revealed by many studies, but most of them demonstrate how the unconscious mind affects consciousness, rather than vice versa. French scientists, for example, recently found that people can identify a written word as familiar even though they have previously seen it for too short a time to register it consciously. Faces can similarly be recognised subliminally, and unconscious recognition has been shown to influence whether or not a person finds another appealing.

The influence of the conscious mind on the unconscious is more difficult to investigate because an unconscious person is out of contact and unable to indicate what – if anything – is going on in their head.

There is, however, a curious condition in which a person is partly conscious and partly asleep, and in which the conscious part of the mind is able to observe some of its unconscious mechanisms. This state is known as lucid dreaming.

Lucid dreaming is generally confined to the "weird and wacky" school of science reporting, and tends to be classified with parapsychology or even psychic phenomena, so few serious researchers have investigated it, and those who have have received scant support. This is unfortunate, because lucid dreaming is a unique tool for exploring consciousness.

It occurs when a person "wakes up" while dreaming – but, instead of clicking back into the real world, continues to dream. The fantasies concocted by the dreaming brain appear to be as solid as the real world, but, as in all dreams, the content is bizarre. Because the dreamer's brain is in full waking mode, he or she realises that such effects must be hallucinations.

This odd state comes about when parts of the brain wake up and other parts stay asleep. During normal dreaming, most sensory input from the outside world is blocked off but the brain continues to generate sights and sounds by drawing on old sensual memories and binding them into complex, often crazy narratives – dreams. If dreams happened while we were awake we would instantly recognise them as unreal because the frontal lobes of the brain, which are active during normal waking, constantly scrutinise the world in a critical way, leaping on anything odd and subjecting it to rational analysis. While we sleep, however, the frontal lobes power down, so when a dream appears we fail to recognise that the things happening in it are daft or impossible. The frontal lobes are also responsible for producing a stable sense of identity. This is why, when they are switched off in dreams, we may turn into other people, or even be two people at once.

In lucid dreaming, what seems to happen is that the frontal lobes come back "online", clicking us back into a normal waking frame of mind. But the rest of the brain continues to dream, throwing up typically barmy scenarios. Another aspect of sleep – paralysis – also continues, so the dreamer is unable to move, even though the "dream



Salvador Dalí's dream sequence in the film 'Spellbound', directed by Alfred Hitchcock

Kobal

body" continues to move and be felt.

A first lucid dream can be frightening, but once people are used to them they usually enjoy them. Unlike ordinary dreams, lucid ones can be controlled consciously, and experienced lucid dreamers learn to create marvellous fantasies and physical sensations, such as leaving

The only glitches tend to involve machines, which never work properly in lucid dreams, and light levels, which fluctuate in a totally unearthly way.

Lucid dreams are often imbued with an other-worldly atmosphere. Sometimes they seem intensely sinister, at other times they are

because the dreamers cannot take an active part in experiments. They can't react to events in the waking world because sensory input from outside is blocked, as in normal sleep. And although they know that they are in a lab being watched by people keen to know what is going on, sleep paralysis prevents them from talking or signalling. If they try to raise a hand, all that happens is that their dream hand is raised.

There is, though, one small window through which the dreamer can communicate with those in the outside world. Sleep paralysis does not affect the eye muscles, so when dreamers go lucid they can move their eyes at will. By sweeping their eyes back and forth a prearranged number of times, lucid dreamers have signalled to researchers the start of their dreams, and answered simple yes/no questions about what they are experiencing. By this means, a few basic things have been established about lucidity: for example, it nearly always arises out of REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, and usually starts quite late in the sleep cycle.

Most people are likely to experience a fleeting lucid dream at least once, and two in ten say they "go lucid" at least once a month. Professor Stephen LaBerge, of Stanford University, who runs the "Lucidity Institute" in California, says that anyone can learn to do it. The trick is to tell yourself repeatedly while awake that when you next go to sleep you will watch out for oddities in your dream, and "wake up" when you notice them. Training yourself to recall your dreams each morning also helps.

Until it happens, it is difficult to imagine how these simple conscious exercises can alter what happens while you are unconscious. But, as with the "alarm clock" exercise, it seems that the machinations of your conscious mind can pervade and influence your sleeping brain.

The boundaries between consciousness and oblivion are more blurred than we may think.

Rita Carter's latest book, *Mapping the Mind*, is published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, price £25

Unlike ordinary dreams, lucid ones can be controlled consciously, and lucid dreamers learn to create marvellous fantasies

the body and flying. It is possible to conjure up a true-as-life image of anything – a paradise island, the view of Earth from outer space, a dead friend; the content is constrained only by what the brain has to draw on in the way of memories and ideas. If you have never seen the view of the Earth from outer space, the sight you will get will be at best a guess – but it will seem absolutely convincing.

accompanied by a feeling of ecstasy. The uncanny effects – especially "out-of-body experiences" and ghostly visitations – have led many to misinterpret the condition as supernatural. Until recently, many psychologists and sleep researchers denied that it even existed.

Although lucid dreaming gives us an insight into the back rooms of our brain, it does not offer much scope for conventional research

TECHNOQUEST

Q: Why do the Earth's magnetic fields flip every million years or so?
The current understanding is that the Earth's magnetic fields are produced by a complex system of electric currents circulating in the molten part (not all of it is molten) of the Earth's iron core. The currents exist because the molten iron is a good electrical conductor and is undergoing convective stirring as it passes its heat upwards into the overlying solid mantle. The currents produce a magnetic field in a similar way to an electromagnet; but the whole thing is more complicated because the magnetic field interacts with the electric currents and keeps changing the convection pattern.

Inside the core the magnetic field is complicated but, fortunately, the net effect seen from the outside is less so, and the Earth's field we measure at the surface is rather like that from a bar magnet which is slowly wobbling. This is why the direction of magnetic north changes slowly with time.

It seems that the convection process sometimes gets into a pattern where the magnetic field seen from the outside becomes very small and then grows again but with the opposite polarity, it reverses. This has been shown to occur in some mathematical models of the Earth's core and also in physical models (involving complicated systems of bar magnets and coils of wire in the laboratory). The only problem is that we are not sure whether these models are exactly like what happens inside the Earth's core, so we cannot predict just what to look for when a reversal is imminent. The bottom line is that we understand the process in general, but not yet in extreme detail.

Funky human body facts If you placed all of your blood vessels end to end, they'd stretch for 97,000 kilometres (60,000 miles) – twice the Earth's circumference.

On average there are 100,000 hairs on the human head. Redheads have about 90,000, people with blond hair 140,000 and those with brown hair something in between. It takes 17 muscles to smile; 43 muscles to frown.

Technoquest website: <http://www.sciencenet.org.uk>



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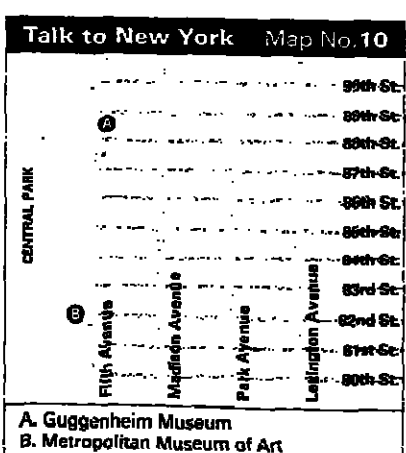
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THE INDEPENDENT

Straight from the horse's mouth

A technique using the teeth of prehistoric species of horse is turning traditional thinking about ancient animal habitats on its head. By Steve Connor

A STUDY of the ancestral cousins of modern horses has upset conventional views on what teeth can tell us about the diet of extinct animals. It was assumed that grazing animals such as horses had high-crowned teeth with enamel ridges, for eating grass. The new research suggests that this was not always the case.

Grass is one of the toughest foods there is to eat. It needs to be cut with a scissor-like action by teeth with sharp edges, which is why the high-crowned teeth and enamel ridges of grazing animals, including zebras, were seen as perfect adaptations to living on a grassland savannah.

The theory is that when modern grasses evolved, about 20 million years ago, the dentition of herbivores changed to exploit the new food. Until then herbivores were typically browsers, like modern-day deer, chewing leaves and bark off shrubs and trees. The teeth of browsers were not suited to the systematic, lawnmower-like cropping of grass.

A simple way of working out the type of food eaten by an animal is to look at its dentition. However, Bruce MacFadden, a palaeontologist at the University of Florida in Gainesville, has devised a clever alternative. He grinds up small parts of a tooth to analyse its combination of carbon isotopes – carbon 12 and carbon 13. As it happens,

grasses typically have a different proportion of isotopes from those of shrubs and trees and this difference is reflected in the chemical make-up of a herbivore's teeth.

Using this approach, Dr MacFadden investigated the teeth of six species of prehistoric horse that lived about 5 million years ago in Florida. Each species possessed the high crowns and enamel ridges of typical grazers, suggesting they were all grass-eaters. Not so, Dr MacFadden found.

Some of the horse species did eat solely grass, but others appeared to have eaten a combination of grasses and shrubs, and a couple had a diet which almost seemed not to include any grass at all. In other words, Dr MacFadden found that some prehistoric horses with the typical dentition of grazing animals, in fact behaved like browsers instead.

"These techniques are revolutionising our ability to understand what prehistoric animals ate. Before now, the only way we could figure that out was by looking at their teeth. Not only that, our research challenges the traditional view that the form and structure of the teeth alone can tell you something about diet," Dr MacFadden said.

"It also gives a lot of information about ancient environments. If you have a community of ancient animals



Were prehistoric horses grazers or browsers? A US palaeontologist may have the answer Robert Hallam

that are all found to be grazers, then you can infer that the environment of the local habitat was grassland. If the animals are all browsers, then you can infer that there was more forest or scrub. It can give you a

broad perspective over millions of years what animals fed upon and what changes occurred in the plant communities," he said.

John Rensberger, a palaeontologist at Washington Univer-

sity in Seattle, describes the study as a "milestone" because it allows scientists to look back in time and divide creatures in an ancient habitat into leaf-eaters and grass-eaters. "This is the best study to date on horse dietary behaviour and change. They've taken a novel approach that challenges the traditional interpretation," Professor Rensberger told the journal *Science*.

All six horse species eventually became extinct, although one of them, called *Dinohippus mericanus*, a one-toed browser, gave rise some 4.5 million years ago to the oldest known species of modern horse, a grazer. It appears that the high-crowned tooth of *D. mericanus*, which may have arisen in its grass-eating ancestor, was equally adequate for dealing with the subsequent change back to a browsing diet of leaves and shrubs. Some time later, the tooth became useful once more for the grazing lifestyle of modern horses.

Dr MacFadden said this shows that high-crowned teeth may have been an example of an irreversible change in evolution. Other experts, such as Paul Koch, a vertebrate palaeontologist from the University of California, Santa Cruz, suggest an alternative explanation. "It may be that horses invented a tooth that's simply good for eating anything – trees, shrubs, grass," he said.

There steps

ght?



I was Alf Garnett's love-child

'This country's called Great. It would have been called Amazing Britain if it wasn't for people like you bringing the average down.'
James Rampton meets Al Murray's comic creation, The Pub Landlord, to discuss lager, peanuts and the current crisis of masculinity

The man sitting opposite me is looking distinctly uncomfortable. He is a Pub Landlord, and half-way through a pub crawl round central London we are ensconced in the corner of a wine bar which he feels is poncey. Not only are there inviting bowls of olives and crusty French bread on the bar, but also the walls are bedecked with abstract French art and, horror of horrors, modern jazz is wafting out of the PA system.

"I have a problem with the olives," he growls, menacingly. "I have a rule in my pub: if it doesn't grow in this country, we don't serve it. There's a loophole for peanuts, obviously. And these paintings make you think 'what's that?' They should all be The Hay Wain, which is the last decent British painting - ever. As for this jazz, it's not normal, is it? When you enter a wine bar, you've crossed over to the dark side."

The Landlord - resplendent in a skin-head haircut, maroon blazer, white shirt and tie with the brewery crest, gold sovereign rings, and a belt-buckle fashioned in the word BERR - seems much more at ease when we repair to the traditional pub down the road. This place is all overflowing ashtrays, flock wallpaper, sticky grey carpet and grimy banquettes stained with beer. He invites himself behind the bar to check the stocks of lager (for the gentlemen) and white wine (for the ladies) and expresses particular satisfaction that Duran Duran's "Is There Something I Should Know?" is blaring out of the jukebox. "I love this," he beams. "It's proper music. At least it's got a tune. All jukeboxes should only play Duran Duran, Queen, Foreigner and Meatloaf's three greatest hits compilations. I like Blur, too - but only because their songs are so short, I can make more money out of the jukebox."

Perhaps it's time for formal introductions. Meet The Pub Landlord, the wickedly accurate send-up created by comedian Al Murray. This figure is, of course, to be found in comedy clubs rather than in snug bars. A strangely magnetic, twinkly character who has been nominated for a Perrier Award at the last three Edinburgh Festivals, the Pub Landlord rails against all that he perceives as not normal - as well as the aforementioned jazz, that includes spaghetti, bottled lager, women, homosexuals and the entire French nation. Spotting a long-haired man in the



Al Murray, The Pub Landlord: 'He's seen the late 20th century and he's terrified by it'

Andrew Buurman

audience whom he takes to be a dreaded liberal, the Landlord starts to twitch: "I bet you're the sort of bloke who likes subtitled films and thinks poetry doesn't have to rhyme. This country's called Great. It would have been called Amazing Britain if it wasn't for people like you bringing the average down." At the end of another desperate nationalistic rant, he starts to clutch at straws. "Jesus was English. The Bible's in English - it stands to reason."

So far, so Alf Garnett, you might think. But what elevates the Pub Landlord into something more resonant is that he goes beyond the prejudices of your average saloon-bar bore to embody the archetypal

Nineties English male - dispossessed, disillusioned, impotent, uncomprehending, and threatened by everything he's not. He's seen the late 20th century and he's terrified by it.

Finally dropping the manic tones of the Cockney oik, Murray returns to his own quieter, Oxford-educated accent and muses that "the Landlord is an attitude, a way of talking and thinking. The pub bit is just an excuse to get me started. He is a man who is in every way unreconstructed - although he's never heard that word and would dismiss it as 'wine-bar talk'."

Murray goes on to explain what makes his inspired creation tick. "The Landlord

is fumbling around for an identity because he has none of his own. No one knows what it means to be English any more, and that's what this is about. The Scots, Irish and Welsh go on about being Celts, but the English aren't sure what they are, apart from not French. With this character, I'm tapping into the idea of faded glory. Everyone knows this country is over the hill, but plenty of people won't admit it. Now we're no longer top dogs, we feel insecure."

In the Landlord's case, that spills over into an almost existential angst. "He's paranoid because as far as he's concerned the whole universe is conspiring against all that he holds dear - even though he's not quite

There's this episode of *Star Trek* where Kirk asks a computer 'what's the point?', and it starts smoking and grinding before it explodes. That's the effect I'm going for."

Scared of anything that deviates from his narrow worldview, the Landlord clings heroically to his ideal of normality. "To him, a normal bloke is someone who on no level whatsoever poses a threat," says Murray. "Any man who looks after his appearance might attract women and so is a threat. A student is a threat because he might have dangerous ideas, while someone who doesn't tuck in his shirt is obviously a threat to order itself."

The character is so perfectly realised that unfortunately not everyone understands it is a joke. "Some people do get the wrong end of the stick," Murray sighs. "They come up and say 'you're spot-on about the French'. I have to tell them, 'it's an act, I didn't mean a word of what I said'."

Murray is as intelligent as the Landlord is ignorant, and he has no difficulty leaving the wild-eyed yob behind when he's off-stage. Indeed, Murray shows every sign of being the Landlord's worst nightmare, a card-carrying liberal. He despairs, for instance, of Eurosceptics. "A lot of people consistently forget that thanks to the EU this is the first time in history there has been an unbroken, 50-year period of peace in Europe. Perhaps that's what they regret - we need to show 'em who's boss again'."

Murray even demonstrates his impeccable wishy-washy credentials by agonising about whether his act is patronising or not. "I do worry about that enormously. I'm extraordinarily middle-class. I went to Oxford and had a very protected upbringing, and here I am doing this working-class buffoon. Who am I to talk about that? But in the end it's comedy, so he has got to be an idiot."

For all the thought that has gone into his creation (who started life as the compere for Harry Hill's jokey pub band), Murray is still wary of probing it too deeply. "I'm suspicious of analysis, because the act is a quicksilver thing that should be left in the moment. You can dissect a frog so much that eventually it dies."

That sounds rather dangerously like wine-bar talk...

From tomorrow, Al Murray's Pub Landlord plays every Saturday until 24 April at the Talk of London, Drury Lane (0171-387 2414). Also touring nationally

Daniel doing it his way

DANIEL BARENBOIM is certainly not deficient in the way he presents himself. Acknowledging applause at the packed Royal Festival Hall on Sunday afternoon, he really made you feel that he was glad you were there, despite the fact that he has been giving piano recitals since the age of seven, which was 50 years ago.

Of late, we've heard more of Barenboim conducting than playing the piano. So it may seem facile to find in his playing of Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata a distinct sense of orchestral texture and symphonic spaciousness. That solemn C-minor chord at the start of the introduction was arresting because it was sober and only moderately loud, and the mood Barenboim created thereafter was restrained and

CLASSICAL
DANIEL BARENBOIM
RFH
LONDON

solemn. Each time Barenboim's right hand crossed over his left in the main Allegro, it was a fraction delayed - deliberate, of course, because otherwise it would have sounded mechanical. In a similar way, he very gently distorted the flowing motion underlying the slow movement. And in the finale, where quite a big fluff in the right hand showed that Barenboim is only human, he enjoyed switching the limelight from the right to the left hand and back again, as if picking out different groups of players in an orchestra.

Simplicity, though, seemed beyond our hero, and though, in Beethoven's Opus 109 Sonata, he slipped through the very fluid first movement with a melting tone, and while he brought an unusual variety of colour and voicing to the fiery second movement, the spirit of the final variations eluded him, because after he had delivered the basic theme with painful deliberation, Beethoven left him no room to do anything extravagant.

Barenboim's playing has always been colourful - sometimes even lurid - so his choice of Debussy's first book of *Préludes* for the second half of the recital looked promising. In one respect he made no concessions to an audience of some 3,000, for a great deal of his playing was extremely

quiet, and a lot of "Le vent dans la plaine" felt like little more than a breeze. He didn't get off to an auspicious start, with an excessively slow and awkwardly accentuated "Danseuses de Delphes". But there was plenty of colourful detail later - sometimes obscuring the basic mood of a piece, so that "Volles" was picked to pieces. And sometimes, too, Barenboim's lavish contrasts seemed indulgent, as in "Des pas sur la neige", or his feeling for sensuous appeal overdone, so that "La fille aux cheveux de lin" became a peroxide *femme fatale*. Yet he was brilliantly evocative in "Les collines d'Anacapri", and his sense of drama really worked wonders in "La sérénade interrompue" and "La cathédrale engloutie".

ADRIAN JACK

All rhyme and no reason

EVERY SO often, those of us in the brightened provinces get a little taste of the theatrical fare that London folk have been enjoying for "many successful years". With loud fanfares and enough advance publicity material to deforest several small Scandinavian countries, the Big Musical rolls into town. This on plot, with dodgy acting and an even dodgier script, it travels on the crest of the nostalgia wave, bringing foot-tapping hits of yesteryear to the culture-starved masses.

Now Bristol has decided that if London can do it, then they can do it too. Yet one would hope that the city could improve on the format. After all, it was the "Bristol Sound" that shook up the music business. At the same time, Bris-

MUSICAL
BLUES BROTHER
SOUL SISTERS
BRISTOL OLD VIC

tol Old Vic has a well-earned reputation for producing exciting theatre, particularly for the young and black audiences ignored by most other venues.

Blues Brother Soul Sisters promised an entertaining show which also incorporated some stylish theatre, reshaping the stale format of the "hits of the past" musical in the searing heat of Bristol's late-Nineties creative boom. Unfortunately, it was born with the words "West End material" scrawled all over it. This is a play in the loosest sense of the term with production numbers; a mutant spawning of theatre and gig.

The gig part soon gains the upper hand; theatre audiences don't usually dance and whoop in the aisles.

The plot has the requisite flimsiness - tribute singer Rufus wants to do Sixties soul, his backing singers rebel and they end up doing Seventies soul too, end of plot - and as a theatrical experience, *Blues Brother Soul Sisters* is the equivalent of discovering that the only food you're going to get in a restaurant is the breadsticks. It's funky, it's loud - oh boy, is it loud - and it taps straight into the current love of all things Seventies.

With a plot which will never shift your brain out of first gear and a score which will keep your feet tapping in fourth, *Blues Brother Soul Sisters* is exactly what you would expect

it to be. Which is both its strength and its weakness. But as the ringing in the ears wears off, a couple of niggling questions remain. Why does a creative powerhouse like Bristol Old Vic have to stage something which, although it has all the makings of a new hit musical, is hardly on the cutting edge of anything very much? And why is this funniest not being funded by one of the commercial theatres who always manage to find the cash to stage the 17th re-tread of *Buddy*, and who will probably be showing *Blues Brother Soul Sisters* with glee on its post-West End nationwide tour?

TOBY O'CONNOR MORSE

Runs until 6 March. Box office (0117) 987 7877

There are three steps to heaven

TWYLA THARP'S *In the Upper Room*, given its first Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) performance at Sadler's Wells, bubbles and fizzes and sends its audience home on an oxygen high. It starts small, with two women in a spotlight, but soon enlarges and builds, chugging out more and more variations to kick up the acceleration. There is a sporty squad in trainers; a ballet phalanx in red point shoes; three unison men like a frieze; and a group in swimsuits. Their kaleidoscopic patterns pile on in quick succession, driven by the soda stream of Philip Glass's commissioned score.

It is a killer for its cast, although BRB don't do it badly, especially Andrew Murphy who manages Tharp's contradictory combination of speed and looseness. But I missed the bite and stamina of her own company in the same piece, and of American Ballet Theatre, who later acquired it. As yet the Brummies don't speak Tharp with natural grace.

Although her choreography

DANCE
BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET
SADLER'S WELLS
LONDON

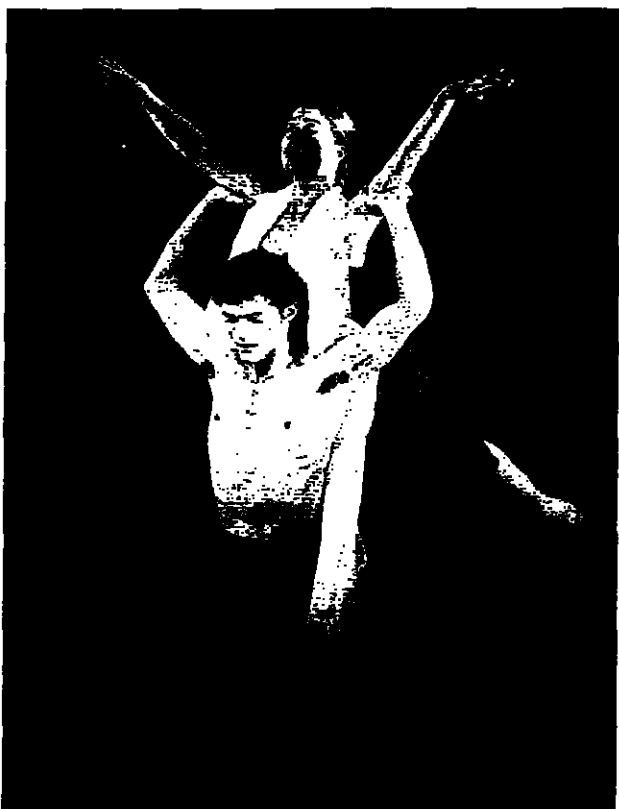
here is part ballet, it is ballet from a detached perspective that seems to underline its strange conventions. The dancers are an ambiguous mix, half athletes, half classical dancers, deconstructing and subverting the signs of ballet with karate kicks, jogs and swivels. The result is typical Tharp profusion, juxtaposing languages in a way that is startling but exhilarating.

Jennifer Tipton's lighting fills the space with criss-crossing shafts like cloud vapour, giving celestial meaning to the title's upper room.

More definitely heaven-oriented, though, is David Bintley's *The Protecting Veil*, created last year for Ninette de Valois's 100th birthday. The ballet's five women are five faces of the Madonna, their veils a reference to the Feast of the Pro-

tecting Veil, celebrated by the Orthodox Church. In the "Annunciation" section Ambra Vello arches backwards over Robert Parker's knee in a stance that not only suggests Gabriel's power, but also recalls a pietà; in "Transfiguration" David Justin and Robert Parker etch the outlines of angels and the agitation of mortals; meanwhile, the white veil sometimes becomes a shroud, sometimes even a cradled child. Such stage pictures are exquisite, set on a simple dark stage with an icon-gold background, and the dancers move with a heartfelt simplicity. But the pace is a marathon, dictated by John Tavener's saintly music for strings and solo cello (James Potter) that loiters interminably in its beauty.

Ninette de Valois's *The Prospect Before Us*, made in 1940, was revived last year for the same birthday: it is a curiosity. See it for its 18th-century Englishness, with its designs inspired by Thomas Rowlandson's engravings and music by William Boyce (arranged by



'The Protecting Veil'

Laurie Lewis

Constance Lambert). See it also for its amusing cameos of historic ballet names. Joseph Cipolla as the danseur noble Didot is wonderfully deadpan in a send-up of the mythological ballets of the time. But the choreography is Dame Ninette

in her most abriessly step-on-the-beat mode; choreography set in a straight-jacket of metronomic metres. The ballet succeeds better as an entertaining mime show.

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MUSIC

The country frontlash

Bill Callahan and Will Oldham are acclaimed pioneers of alternative country, yet the former is inspired by the Wu-Tang Clan and the latter does heavy metal covers. By Ben Thompson

LYRIC SHEETS

MARTIN NEWELL

With *Blondie* at the top of the charts again for the first time in 17 years, the unlikely comeback seems to be the next big thing. The recent comebacks of Tony Christie, Andy Williams, Lonnie Donegan and Engelbert Humperdinck may just be the tip of the iceberg

The Comeback Kid

A picture of a younger man
With bouffant hair
And shoes like scuppered sampans
Adorn the journals of that day
The Comeback Kid is on his way

On breakfast time/daytime TV
A rodeo of memories
That mustang never threw the Kid
A cowboy who'd survived the change
The Voice not quite the way it was
But still at home on its old range

Who could forget the string of hits?
He wails: "I've never been away"
Just took a break in cabaret
For twenty years or so - in theory
A revamped hit: "Girl From Nîmri"
Finds favour with a college crowd
Who suddenly discover that
The trademark shoes and cardigans
For one whole term, are where it's at

The Comeback Kid is coming back
Through drink, divorce and heart attack
Is shunted squinting out on stage
Blinks, unfamiliar in the lights
A smile carries on his lips
Half-arrogance, half-gratitude
But in the wings coughs like a tractor
And throws up in a vase of flowers.
Nervous. Like a rusty actor

And out the brash young pundits come
Panting puppies, waggy tails
Pleased to see the old boy back
Fans for years. Know every track
"A total pro!" Of course he is.
"Mysteriously overlooked"
(Forgotten by the music biz.)
Blew everyone apart he did.
In hotel lifts. The Comeback Kid

It's only the second week in February and already spring's sonic daffodils are poking through the boy-band mulch. Those who feared they would live their whole lives without seeing Mercury Rev and Tony Christie in the same top 20 singles chart can now rest easy. And a double bill of albums every bit as deliciously twisted as that unlikely coupling has got 1999 off to a flyer in the long-playing stakes. Bonnie "Prince" Billy's *I See A Darkness* and *Knock Knock* by Smog are the sort of records decades get remembered for, never mind years.

Both are released on the same label - Wandsworth-based boutique imprint Domino Records, which has for some years been carving out a reputation as Britain's most inspired independent - and both were made by serious-seeming Americans with a lot of history behind them. Bill Callahan, aka Smog, and Will Oldham, aka Bonnie "Prince" Billy, sit stiffly in different South West London bars, eager to explain themselves.

In comparison with previous Smog releases, *Knock Knock* is an impressively upbeat record. The line, "For the first time in my life I let myself be held, like a big old baby", is fully representative of the overall lyrical tone, and the fact that this album features not one but two songs showcasing the Chicago Children's Choir is fair warning of its maverick tendencies.

"Have you ever heard a song with children's voices on it that you didn't like?" demands Callahan. A somewhat forbidding individual who will never use words when silence is available, the image of him in the studio surrounded by tiny acolytes is more or less irresistible. *Knock Knock*'s choral segments were not recorded live, it turns out, but with Callahan lip-synching the main vocal through a glass studio partition. "They wanted to see me sing," he says proudly.

Having released some of the strangest, loveliest records of the Nineties under names that were variations on palatial themes (Palace Music, Palace Brothers, Palace Songs), it made a crazy kind of sense that Will Oldham should rebrand himself in tribute to the son of a deposed monarch. The unworldliness of Bonnie "Prince" Billy's name is in sharp contrast with the increased accessibility of his music. Previously a man who seemed to carry the weight of the world in his forehead, Oldham admits that "Pleasure was more on the agenda" with *I See A Darkness*. He hopes this record will "enable the listener to consider as a victory things he or she



Bill Callahan, aka Smog. His new sources of inspiration, surprisingly, include Funkadelic

would previously have realistically thought of only as a defeat."

Ask him what brought about this sudden upturn in his emotional fortunes and Oldham will tell you about the three weeks he spent in the winter of 1997, touring Europe with a group of improvisational musicians, playing live soundtracks to an experimental black-and-white film about the hardships of life in an Alaskan fishing village. The funny thing is he will not actually be joking. You can even find a record of the tour: if you look very carefully (*The Last Place To Go* by Boxhead Ensemble Atavistic LP66CD), and share this experience for yourself.

Callahan, too, has some rather surprising new sources of inspiration to tell of. A trip to see Wu-Tang Clan had-bad-boy Dirty Bastard perform last summer seems to have made a big impression on him. "It was really great, you know? He had a posse - eight other rappers came out first and did three songs without him - and it was like watching a party. What I like about music is to get the feeling that you're spending a day talking to somebody. I also like

Funkadelic a lot, too, because you get that sense from them."

It may be that earlier Smog records, 1996's mesmerising, borderline catatonic *The Doctor Came At Dawn*, for example, were heavily influenced by Funkadelic, but if so, that influence was very discreet. When Will Oldham said in a recent American interview that he hoped people would listen to his records in the same way his New York neighbour listened to Mariah Carey, a trend became discernible. To understand it, you have to go back a little.

Oldham and Callahan first played live together in Britain in 1995. With Britpop at its brazen height and America still trying to fill the void left by the death of Kurt Cobain with clump and grind grunge pretenders, the ancient quietness of their music was a marvellous revelation. Four years on, the reconnection with the well-springs of American folk pioneered by Palace and Smog has become a commonplace. *Mojo* cover stories, *Radio 1* *Newswest* reports and free CDs given away with *Uncut* magazine celebrate the commodification of that reconnection under such sweeping umbrellas

headings as "alt country", "Americana" and "the new roots explosion".

Such marketing ruses are anathema to ornery frontier individualists like Oldham and Callahan. "Calling the music Americana is ridiculous," the former says sensibly. "What happens to the rest of America?" The suggestion that he might be part of a wider musicianly society goads Callahan to unheard-of heights of annoyance. "I don't know if anyone in their right mind..." he pauses, as if surprised by his own ardour; "it's not for me, at least, to be part of a community. My music changes so much it's ridiculous for me to be lumped in with other people. I guess I'm pretty lazy and if I felt I was part of a community I would just think, 'Oh well, let Jimmy take care of it.'"

The two men's determination to set themselves apart from their burgeoning would-be peer group has had some hilarious results. In conversation, Oldham persistently pronounces the name of his inexplicably revered fellow troubadour Mark Eitzel as "Mark Asshole". Where he once peered out at his audience with a look of child-like bemuse-

ment, Bonnie "Prince" Billy's recent London Astoria show found him rocking out in a sweat-soaked vest and belching loudly into the microphone. He later amazed a packed King's Cross Water Rats with a testosterone-crazed cover of AC/DC's "Big Balls".

Callahan, meanwhile, styles *Knock Knock* as "an album for teenagers". For the cover art, he chose lightning and wildcats, on the basis that these are "things teenagers identify with". This suggests an intuitive rapport with the youth of today which is little short of frightening.

All of this repositioning would be no more than a diversion if the music it had produced wasn't so fantastic. Call it what you will - and "The alt country frontlash" is the designation all the smart money's on - Oldham and Callahan's rebellion against received wisdom is an example to us all. Neil Young once wrote that on feeling his music becoming middle of the road, his only option was to head for the ditch. Bill Callahan puts it even better in *Knock Knock*'s exquisite "River Guard". "We are constantly on trial," he sings. "It's a way to be free."

Ain't no depression deep enough

THOUGH ON record they sound only a pitchfork away from American Gothic, in concert the country duo Gillian Welch and David Rawlings are a picture of sobriety in their grey suits, looking for all the world like young 'uns promenading after church on Sunday. The substance of their songs, and the manner of their performance, speaks of a much darker ecclesiastical influence, however, with songs such as "The Devil Had A Hold On Me", "Rock Of Ages" and "I'm Not Afraid To Die" scorched by the embers of a faded fire-and-brimstone sensibility. There's a strong sense of implacable destiny in their compositions, which are consequently marked by a deep fatalism. Things rarely get better in their songs, and one frequently finds

oneself, head bowed, at some grave-site or another.

Announcing "Winter's Come And Gone", Welch deadpans: "This is the only happy song on the new record. We like to get it out of the way." She's only half-joking. The couple's onstage personae, though, are at odds with their songs' depressing demeanour: the set is punctuated with a string of laconic asides, most of which deprecate the duo's stagecraft - and when Rawlings spots that Welch has her capo on the wrong fret, they go ahead and play a few bars anyway, just to demonstrate how the song would sound in clashing keys.

Welch's occasional adoption of banjo is explained as "the first prong of our assault on mainstream radio".

LIVE

GILLIAN WELCH
AND DAVID RAWLINGS
DINGWALLS
LONDON

the second prong, she adds a few songs later, is that commercial certainty, yodelling. "We listened to pop radio and decided that what we needed was more banjo and more yodelling." And listening to the gorgeous "My Morphine", featuring what must be the laziest, most enervated yodel in music history, one can only concur: this is music of mesmerising power which painstakingly tracks the deepest contours of depression.

The duo's carefully cultivated air of

rustic simplicity - the sepiat album sleeves, the acoustic settings, the austere beauty of Welch's voice - is somewhat deceptive, however. In performance, the sophistication of their arrangements is more readily discerned, as Rawlings' tiny Thirties Epiphone acoustic threads subtle lead lines of great complexity in and around Welch's banjo or rhythm guitar. The dry, dead tone of the banjo harks back decades to the time of The Carter Family and The Stanley Brothers, whose influence is also evident in the duo's striking mountain harmonies, their voices circling each other in a dissonant dance between faint hope and deep despair.

Welch's vocals, in particular, are marvellously idiosyncratic, rejecting

the buxom, cosmetised delivery of formulaic country-pop to probe the darker corners of her chosen tradition. Slipping casually in and out of falsetto, as if she barely has the will to keep moored in one register, her voice evokes an entire forgotten history of hard times and harsh judgements, instinctive sin and eternal guilt - though it's not always as archaic as it appears. "It's in our nature to leave you with a good killer song," quips Welch as they lead into the gripping "Caleb Meyer", a traditional enough murder ballad on the face of it - except that in this case, the intended victim fights back and the rapist ends up dead. Neo-traditional feminist mountain music, anyone?

ANDY GILL

RIFFS

THE FIRST AND LATEST RECORDS BOUGHT BY DIVINE COMEDY'S NEIL HANNON

First record

Vienna, Ultravox
It's unusual that my first record isn't dire. Having said that, the second record was "Rat Rapping" by Roland Rat! It's a pseudo-classical, Euro-style record, with the big orchestra, the crazy Chopin piano riffs and an electrified violin - which was all the rage in the Eighties. Ultravox weren't very hip at the time, but I didn't understand them so I thought they must be hip. I was trying to prove I was cool to my older brothers, who were always trying to outdo each other with the most obscure record they could find. I was physically scared by music that didn't make sense; I remember hearing a modern English



record and having to leave the room. The video began a trend for black-and-white film, atmospherically shot in European cities. I liked the big white horse, and Midge Ure's sideburns were obviously a formative influence. I think it's

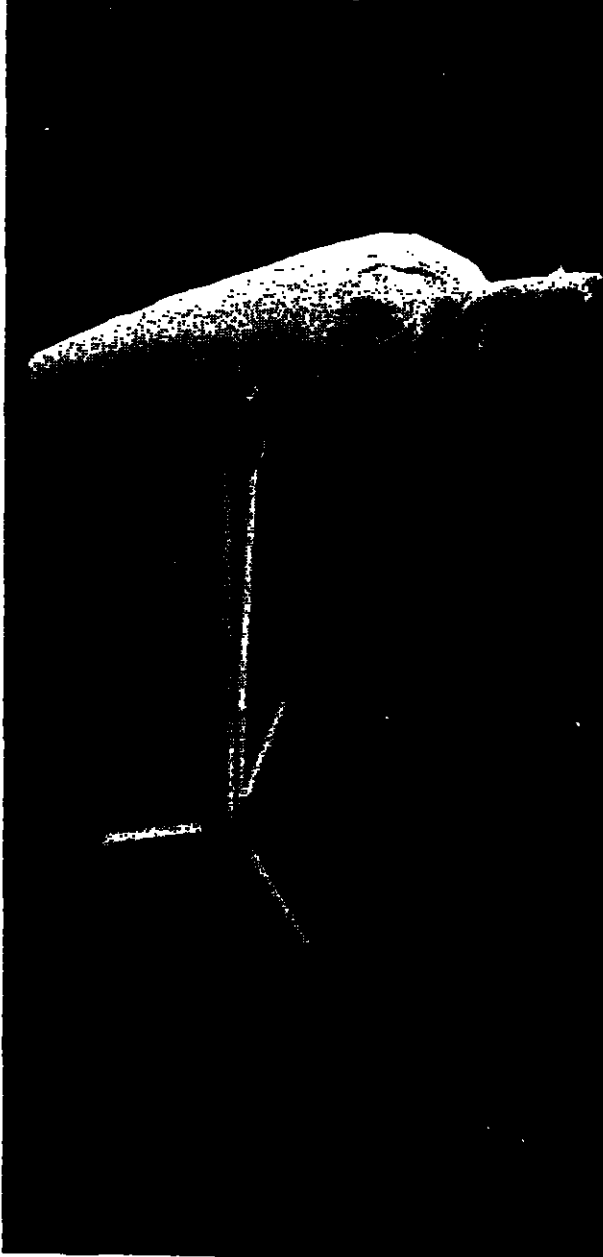
bizarrely relevant to what I have become. My musical taste has developed strangely over the years, through a big pop faze in my early teens, then graduating to stadium acts such as U2 and Peter Gabriel and then finally REM and the indie bands of the late Eighties. I can see that I was trying to find music that really excited me, and finally I ran out. I had to start making music.

Last record
Walks Like a Panther All Seeing Eye
It's fabulous and wonderful and just brilliant. It's in a similar vein to the Propellerhead's recent hit "History Repeating Itself" with Shirley Bassey; it has

an old Sixties crooner, the words are by Jarvis Cocker and it's a big beat kind of thing. Fabulous. It is a very strange and laudable idea that creates an eerie atmosphere. It is an impressive cross-pollination of ideas. The lyrics are fabulous, full of one-liners such as the chorus: "fly like an eagle, walk like a panther." And it's just so wonderfully cheesy that it ought to be ridiculous, but it's not. It has something which makes you want to strut your stuff and excited me thoroughly. The mix suits my totally eclectic taste.

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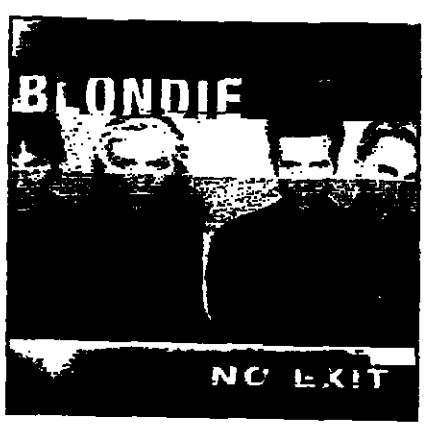
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THIS WEEK'S ALBUM RELEASES
REVIEWED BY ANDY GILL



BLONDIE
No Exit
Beyond

A FEW years ago, when the ravages of age had thrown Debbie Harry's chill beauty into sudden recession, the return of Blondie as a pop force seemed the least likely of comebacks. For while the sagging visages of such grizzled old campaigners as Page & Plant seemed somehow appropriate, a kind of karmic payback for their well-documented years of dissolute indulgence, Debbie's untouchable perfection was central to her group's appeal. But as her poorly-charted solo career and subsequent dead-end role fronting the Jazz Passengers demonstrated, it was not the sole deciding factor. The music still mattered, more than most had suspected. It's fortunate, then, that keyboard player Jimmy Destri had squirreled away such an obvious hit as "Maria" during his years away from the band. Indeed, that *No Exit* is as powerful a comeback effort as it is - especially when compared to the pathetic revival tour of near-contemporaries Culture Club and The Human League - is as much due to Destri's ear for a surefire pop classic as it is to Deb-

bie's bewitching revivification. Even at a time when No 1 hits are as common and forgettable as ants, "Maria" already sounds like you've known it for ever. The rest of the album, while not quite as strong, packs several decent punches. "Forgive And Forget" aims for the sleek weightlessness of "Heart Of Glass", but lands somewhere closer to the trance-pop of Madonna's last album, which may be no bad thing. "Night Wind Sent", too, is a graceful expression of devotion, while Destri's "Nothing Is Real But The Girl" displays a similar well-chorded craft to "Maria". Away from their forte, they're capable enough as they try on country music ("The Dream's Lost On Me"), dub reggae ("Divine"), psychedelic drone chant ("Dig Up The Conjo"), cool pop-jazz ("Boom Boom In The Zoom Zoom Room") and a kind of Bach-hop classical-metal rap duet with Coolio ("No Exit"), though their versatility is best expended on the Green-Whit-Barry street opera "Out In The Streets", where Debs is multi-tracked as the girl group to end all girl groups.



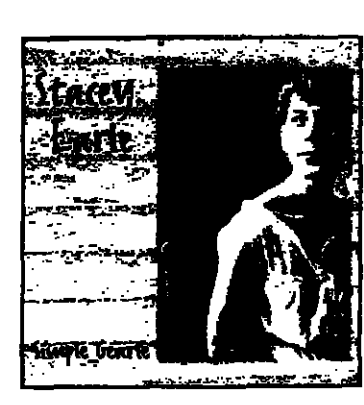
JONATHAN RICHMAN
I'm So Confused
Vapor

OF COURSE Jonathan Richman is so confused: after a lifetime spent trying to promote the idealism of adolescence in the face of overwhelming adult turmoil, who wouldn't be? This is Richman's great gift, of course, one which the producers of *There's Something About Mary* recognised when they commissioned him to serve as the film's Greek chorus, articulating the hero's perplexity with an innocent insouciance. It's a position he's rarely performed as well as he does here: when he sings "I Can Hear Her Fighting With Herself", it's probably because he can hear similar battles raging within himself. The results are not equally successful, however: a humorous, intelligent rumination like "True Love Is Not Nice" can be followed by a couple of clumsy, coy exercises like "Love Me Like I Love" and "Hello From Cupid", where he overplays the lovable naïf badly. But it's impossible to dislike someone who dares rhyme "across the pond" with "demi-monde", and in the same song claims of his teenage self "well, I didn't like this and I didn't like that/I was such a little brat". You too, Jonathan?



POP-OFF TUESDAY
Pop-Off Tuesday
Pickled Egg

LIKE THEIR American colleagues Cibo Matto, Pop-Off Tuesday are a Japanese duo who blend distinctive vocal licks with backings bolted together from an avalanche of sounds and samples. At times, they sound like an avalanche; at others, like metal fatiguing. Fragments of lounge muzak, slide guitar, industrial noise, muted trumpet and electric violin surface jaggedly within these 12 tracks, looming suddenly in the path of the time like icebergs. "Mad Tea Party" is typical: the shadowy contours of a plaintive lo-fi song are thrown into sharp relief by stark, loud bursts of samples, setting up a captivating tension. At their best, as on the single "Unworldly", the elements come together with an enticing bleakness reminiscent of Nico's masterpiece *The Marble Index*; other useful reference points are Pere Ubu, early Faust, Morcheeba and - thanks to singer Minori's engaging melismatic style - The Cocteau Twins. Their lyrics are almost as opaque as Liz Fraser's, though not without the occasional shaft of clarity. "We all flow and feed on lightning", indeed. Recommended.



STACEY EARLE
Simple Gearle
Gearle

IT COULD hardly be said that Stacey Earle was riding on the back of big brother Steve's celebrity - if that were the case, she'd surely have done it before she got to be 37, rather than running away from home, getting married and having kids before she was out of her teens, which is what she wound up doing. The cover of her self-released debut signals her intentions through its deliberate echo of Gillian Welch's *Revolution*, but while there's an engaging simplicity to her gentle country-rock arrangements, she lacks Welch's way with portents and archetypes - and she sounds more like Nanci Griffith, anyway. Like brother Steve, Stacey has, however, lived a little, and it's that life she draws on in her songs. These are plainly wrought tales of small lives and small mercies - of weddings and separations, of dead-end jobs and weekend escapes, of being so lonely you're driven to seek refuge in a supermarket - told in a casual, conversational style which, at its best, resembles "Ode To Billie Joe". A promising first collection, though Stacey needs to develop a more distinctive, individual voice.



EDDIE HINTON
Hard Luck Guy
Zane

THIS POSTHUMOUS release is aptly titled: an esteemed Southern soul contemporary of such Sixties legends as Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett, Eddie Hinton played on records by Pickett, Aretha, the Staples and Sam & Dave, but failed to make much of a mark with his own releases. Then, just as he was starting to get recognition in the Nineties thanks to albums such as *Letters From Mississippi* and *Very Blue Highway*, he passed away in 1995. Hard luck indeed, considering his talents as guitarist, and especially vocalist: Hinton's voice is about as black as white tubes get, a laryngeal bark akin to Otis's or OV Wright's raw husk. It's best represented here on the tracks recorded in the late-Seventies for Capricorn Records, spruced up since his death with dark, burning horns and sympathetic swamp-funk arrangements by old Muscle Shoals Studio chums such as Spooner Oldham, Clayton Ivey and Johnny Sandlin. It's mostly Eddie's material, too, and in the case of songs such as "Lovin' Chain" and "I Can't Be Me", top-drawer stuff rarely has the emotional dislocation of deep soul been expressed as clearly as in the latter.

Into the dark with Jekyll & Hyde

Composer Barry Guy and his wife make music that defies categorisation. They like to discuss work while putting out the bins. By Nick Kimberley

THE FIRST Law of Contemporary Music states: composers compose, improvisers improvise, and never the twain shall meet. As for musicians, those who perform from scores have a horror of improvisation, while those who improvise can't see the point of writing it all down. A few, though, reject that division of labour, and Barry Guy is one of them. As an improvising performer he plays double bass solo, in duos, trios and quartets, or as part of the London Jazz Composer Orchestra, which he founded in 1970, and for which he provides jazz compositions. Meanwhile, as a classical composer he has had his music performed by Pierre Boulez, the Kronos Quartet and the baroque viol consort Fretwork. For most of his career Guy has kept the two worlds apart, but recently his classical compositions have incorporated a measure of the improviser's freedom. "Compositionally I've lived a Jekyll and Hyde

existence," he says. "On one side I had my jazz compositions, where improvisation is my lifeline to a purity of musical thought, and flexibility and interpretative creativity would be inherent in the scores. Within the straight tradition I was more exact, putting into the score every single dynamic, every tempo change, probably providing much more information than was necessary. "What has happened over the last 10 years is a gradual rationalisation of what needs to be in the score to bring out the best interpretation: a simplicity of presen-

tation engenders a more creative approach from so-called 'straight' musicians. I like them to add something. I'm not writing down improvisations, but I appreciate that you can build in more freedom for the players." What that freedom requires is absolute trust between composer and performer, and for that reason, Guy suggests, "I enjoy working with musicians that I know, not only personally, but in the manner of their playing, being able to speak to them as performers about what we're trying to pull out of the music, without musical politics or matters of finance coming into it. In those circumstances, writing music becomes like making a suit: you fit the piece around the personality." Who better, then, to write music for than his partner, the violinist Maya Homburger? The two met 10 years ago playing in Christopher Hogwood's Academy of Ancient

Music, an orchestra that pioneered the use of original, 'period' instruments in performances of ancient music, from Bach to Beethoven. And, as a new CD of Guy's music shows, that adds an extra dimension: she plays a baroque violin, so Guy's new music is written for an old instrument, sometimes twinned with his own double bass. What emerges is a unique amalgam of two sound-worlds. "The modern double bass makes available a lot of colours," says Guy. "What's interesting is to feed those colours into the darkness, if you like, of the baroque violin. The sheer beauty of Maya's violin has led my music into more melodic areas. It's been a sharp learning curve for me, but since we're in the same household, I can go into the next room and say, 'What do you think of this?' while I'm putting the dustbin out."

Homburger herself is keenly aware of how the music fits her, and her instrument: "It's a beautiful 1740 Italian violin by Antonio dalla Costa, from Treviso. Most good Italian violins have been altered so that they can be used as a 'modern' violin, but this one has never been tampered with. People have an image of baroque violins sounding aggressive, slightly piercing or nasal, but when Barry writes for me, he has in mind the precise colours of this instrument, which are often dark. The strings on a baroque violin are at such a low tension that you get more overtones, and there's a tremendous difference between the upper and lower strings. You can float the bow, which is very light, across the strings, so I like to work with lightweight sounds, with bow speed rather than bow pressure. If you play Barry's pieces on a modern instrument, you can look for similar sounds, but some of them you simply won't get."

"One of Barry's qualities as an improviser is the range of colours he gets, colours nobody would expect from a double bass, and he has managed to find a way for me to make some of those sounds on my instrument. That in turn has allowed me to become braver in my performances of baroque music. I don't have to strive for a totally manicured sound, I take more risks. Sounds and colours that might not be 'scholarly' are now part of my music' might not be totally 'scholarly' have become part of my music-making."

When Homburger and Guy perform together, the programme always includes baroque music alongside Guy's work, whether played from score or improvised. For Guy, it's a natural symbiosis: "Quite often in concert, I follow on without a break after Maya has played, say one of Telemann's Fantasies. Her last note will be my starting-point, and what I play becomes a reflection on the atmosphere that she has left in the air. It works especially well in a church, where the resonances of Telemann may be going off into the distance as I pick up her lead." Homburger adds: "One part of the audience may be thinking, 'Improvisation is difficult to listen to', while the other half thinks, 'Telemann's hard work'; but if you play with intensity, emotion and clear diction, the event becomes about human beings communicating, and that's what we want to achieve."

Barry Guy's 'Celebration' performed by Maya Homburger is available on ECM CD 1643

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GOD IS IN THE DETAILS

POP MUSIC is not a great medium for natural dynamics. Music technology puts a thick black line around every element - as in a painting by Patrick Caulfield. There's little room for the blending and delicate brush strokes you expect in jazz or classical music. Yet the process of multitrack pop recording (once cynically described to me as the art of removing all dynamics and personality from the original performance - then taking days to put them all back in again at the mixing stage) has yielded some striking moments of beautiful artificiality. One of the best is in the final minute of "Don't Give Up" (So, Virgin PGCD5), after Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush have stopped singing and the bassist Tony Levin comes to the fore with a sneaky, reggae-flavoured riff. The recording puts you right in the middle of the rhythm section - the drums are close, and played hard, but the bass is much louder than it could ever be if you were really listening in that studio. Gabriel is giving us a privileged insight into the intimate workings of the recording studio. Then comes a magical moment - we start to hear backing vocals - women's voices - singing "Don't give up", a three-line, three-word phrase pitched immaculately and soulfully against the groove. It's a thrilling entry, yet it is incredibly quiet, and it doesn't get any louder; as in classic dub, you have to listen through the drums and bass - the background becomes the foreground and vice versa. By the end of 1993, when Gabriel recorded a live version of the song (Secret World Live, Real World, PGCD8), the almost inaudible lines of the So version had turned into big, bold chant. It's defiant and raucous - almost rock'n'roll. Perhaps you could read the changing times into this, as the blatant pit closures that triggered the original lyric were absorbed into our mental map of the industrial landscape and slag heaps were removed or grassed over. The content of the final verse may ring truer than ever ("For every job, so many men/So many men no one needs"), but the entreaty "don't give up" has acquired a more general application. Rather than whispered by a wife or lover, the line is shouted out like the mantra of an American self-help guru. On the other hand, you can't go out in front of 20,000 people and sing such a catchy hook line at next to no volume - it's not the way stadium rock works. No, quite apart from the words and the star guest vocalist and the video, "Don't Give Up" is a song that succeeds because of the sum of its tiny musical details.

Manu Katche resists the temptation ever to hit his snare-drum, for example. There's also the God-like authority of Richard Tee's piano chords. Tee was a session musician's session musician, who created several sublime moments in records by Carla Bley, Paul Simon and his own group, Stuff. And the song has the kind of perfect, painstaking mix that audio-engineering schools would use for tutorials, were it not for those strangely quiet backing vocals. Was this deliberate perversity or just a happy accident? Or even an unresolvable mistake? It's the kind of thing - a strange mix of familiar elements - that studio people hear every day. Gabriel's masterstroke is to share it with us, and to use it with such subtlety, as the coda to one of his best-ever songs.

JOHN L. WALTERS

F.A.B. Presents

Oysterband

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The pianist as method actor

What's Arcadi Volodos's secret?
The Russian pianist only started
playing when he was 16 yet he's
now a consummate performer

INTERVIEWING MUSICIANS is an odd, often pointless business, for with so abstract an art words are largely irrelevant. But those employed to spread the word still keep on trying, and their prey – though some play hard to get – still offer themselves for scrutiny. But not Arcadi Volodos.

Progrmarched to the interview-room by his desperate Sony producers, he has several times gone through the motions, but you could put what he's revealed on the back of an envelope. This 26-year-old Russian pianist hates both journalists and photographers, and makes it abundantly clear. If this makes him a challenge, he is also a fascinating enigma. How did this essentially rootless boy, who by his own admission didn't give a toss about the piano until he was 16, manage to turn himself into a consummate artist in a mere eight years?

Fancying that my chances might be better if I tracked him to his lair, I went to see him in Madrid. Though he'd agreed to the meeting, he did all he could to evade it, hiding behind a locked gate and closed shutters till I was on the point of giving up and going home. In the event our conversation – in French, at his request – threw up more interesting than the one I'd come to sort out, and which he dismissed with a simple disclaimer.

There was no magic about his rapid transformation: "It was just a facility I had," I discovered that he's the musical equivalent of a method actor. If he plays a piece by Rachmaninov in public, he will first have played privately not only all the composer's piano repertoire, but his songs and symphonies as well. Asked whether he was always drawn to the 19th-century composers who are his staple fare, he replied that he was "interested in all music. If a piece doesn't please me, I ask myself what's wrong in my

SIGHT READINGS



MICHAEL CHURCH

head. I don't say, 'I don't like this music.' I say, 'This music doesn't like me.' So which music doesn't like him? "It's too early to say."

Which contemporary composers interest him? "For me, all music is contemporary. Bach is a highly contemporary composer, topical even." There was, he said, no such thing as the music of the past.

What, I asked, was his view of the atonality movement? "What Schoenberg did with harmony was a logical progression." But also a cul-de-sac? "They said the same of Scriabin, yet his music was no cul-de-sac. You can never predict what will emerge from a seeming dead end. Music is made by geniuses, not theorists. As Richter said, it's for playing and listening to, not for talking about."

In other words, go home. Did he see any value in critics? "My best concerts get bad reviews and my worst ones are praised. Critics are the only people capable of grasping a piece at a single hearing. For all other mortals the process requires repeated listening."

Did he ever suffer from nerves? "Of course. But not on my own account – on behalf of the music. When I play Bach, my concern is that he should emerge well, not me." Was he happier as a concerto-player or



Arcadi Volodos: 'My best concerts get bad reviews and my worst ones are praised. Critics are the only people capable of grasping a piece at a single hearing'

a recitalist? "The latter. Work with an orchestra is all in black and white, whereas I am interested in nuances of colour."

The force of that remark should be apparent when he makes his South Bank debut on Sunday night, playing pieces by the Russians he loves most. As the conversation wore on I found myself liking this oddly gauche young man, in whom social rebelliousness and musical reverence seemed to go hand in hand. While I waited for my taxi to arrive, he took me into his studio and serenaded me with snatches of Beethoven, Schubert and Scarlatti,

plus a long jazz improvisation. Volodos dominated his instrument with ease, like a big bear at play. Back in London, I heard a magazine photographer's tale of woe. She too had gone to see him in Madrid, but when she'd asked him to pose at the keyboard he had refused, denying that there was a piano in the house.

THIS WEEK sees a new symptom of world music's unstoppable growth, in the form of a quarterly publication from Gramophone Publications, called *Songlines*. Discounting personal bias – I'm one of its reviewers

– I have to say that its first issue promises well, but that it poses no threat to the monthly *Folowroots* which for 20 years has led the field. *Folowroots* is rough at the edges and blissfully crammed with information, and reviews 3,000 records a year. *Songlines* is more elegant, more modest in scope, and aimed at a less specialist readership.

"We don't want to create an exclusive club," says its editor, Simon Broughton. "We want to encourage people to explore, and steer them towards the best things on offer." He's keen to proclaim his independence from advertising pressures:

a significant gesture, coming from the advertising-girt Gramophone stable. In this respect he'll get a run for his money from *Folowroots*, which takes sadistic pleasure in dispatching duds. Viz, of a disc entitled *Medicine Woman II*: "Serious New Age ordure ahoy!"

ONE HOT afternoon in 1997 I found myself at a strange Kensington tea-party where Larry Adler suddenly launched into "Rhapsody in Blue". He'd been sitting around looking frail, but he clearly responded to the élan of his accompanist – the much-

maligned David Helfgott. Since their performance was well-nigh immaculate it ought, I suggested, to be preserved for posterity. When might we record them? Adler's reply was gloomy. "Forget it. I could be dead next week." So it's nice to find him celebrating his 85th birthday on stage tonight at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. On his latest record, *The Genius of Larry Adler* (Decca), he plays "Rhapsody in Blue" accompanied by a ghost in the form of the composer's own piano-roll recording. But Helfgott is very much with us. Come on, Larry, you've still got time to make that recording.

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13 Feb 7.30pm
14 Feb 7.30pm
15 Feb 7.30pm
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Theatre

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NEW FILMS

DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART (PG)
Director: Will Patterson
Starring: Anthony Edwards, Jenny Seagrove
So how bad is Don't Go Breaking My Heart? Well, first off, it wastes the skills of ER's Anthony Edwards as a Yankee sports therapist adrift in Blighty. Secondly, it overplays the supposed charms of Jenny Seagrove as the widowed mum he gets together with. This antique of a romantic weeps wheezes towards a finale so predictable that you'd have to be dead not to see it coming. West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

I THINK I DO (15)
Director: Brian Sloan
Starring: Alex Arquette, Christian Maelen
Ah, the wedding caper. An excuse for romances, for an ensemble cast, for the tension of etiquette against emotion. Writer-director Brian Sloan ticks all the right boxes during this spry baby-boomer outing, but it's too hyperactive and ingratiating for its own good. West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue

JACK FROST (PG)
Director: Troy Miller
Starring: Michael Keaton, Mark Addy
The respective trajectories of two stars meet for an instant in this out-of-season Yuletide tale. On the way down goes Michael Keaton as a self-absorbed bluesman who dies and then gets reincarnated as a snowman. And on the way up is The Full Monty's Mark Addy as his salt-of-the-earth best mate. They meet, they pass, and formula fun is had by all. West End: UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (LA VITA È BELLA) (PG)
Director: Roberto Benigni
Starring: Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi
See The Independent Recommends, right. West End: Barbican Screen, Curzon Mayfair, Odeon Kensington, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Hill, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea. And local cinemas

MADELINE (U)
Director: Daisy Von Scherler Mayer
Starring: Frances McDormand, Nigel Hawthorne
All aboard for storybook Fifties Paris. That gingerbread house on the corner is the boarding school attended by nine-year-old Madeline (Hatty Jones). That hatchet-faced woman out front is the strict instructor (Frances McDormand). That car going by is a Citroën. You get the picture. This overdogged rendering of Ludwig Bemelmater's kids' stories looks a shade one-dimensional; all artistry and no art. West End: Clapham Picture House, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

MY GIANT (PG)
Director: Michael Lehmann
Starring: Billy Crystal, George Murnan
Billy Crystal plops his way through Michael "Heathers" Lehmann's Lilliputian comedy about a sleazebag Hollywood agent who gets a few life lessons when he runs into a saintly giant (George Murnan) in Romania. Expect size jokes in the middle, and glib morals at the end. Local: Acton Park Royal Warner Village, Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Fulham Cinesworld the Movies, Harrow Warner Village

YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS (18)
Director: Neil Labute
Starring: Ben Stiller, Jason Patric
Another troubling X-ray of American mores from In the Company of Men director Neil Labute. Your Friends and Neighbours widens its focus a little, yet in all other respects this looks like a carbon copy of Labute's debut. There are the same stage-bound confines, the same structured misanthropy, the same dense weave of dialogue. Two features in, and Labute has chewed this bone to bits already. West End: Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Renoir, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket. And local cinemas

Xan Brooks

GENERAL RELEASE

ANTZ (PG)
Computer-animated trifle about a worker ant (voiced by Woody Allen) who tries to break out of his totalitarian rut. West End: Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Trocadero. Repertory: The Lux Cinema, Prince Charles. And local cinemas

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)
In the follow-up to Babe, knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak animatronic fairytale. West End: Barbican Screen, Plaza Ritzy Cinema. Local: Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12, Richmond Odeon Studio. Repertory: National Film Theatre

A BUG'S LIFE (U)
See The Independent Recommends, above. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea. And local cinemas

BULWORTH (18)
Warren Beatty's new political satire is crude and condescending on occasion, yet genuinely audacious and committed, too. West End: Odeon Kensington, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

ELIZABETH (15)
Shekhar Kapur's story of a female figurehead struggling to gain purchase in a male world largely neglects the opportunities for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty. West End: ABC Pantun Street, Odeon Mezzanine

ENEMY OF THE STATE (15)
Will Smith and Gene Hackman star in this big, noisy and effectively claustrophobic conspiracy thriller. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

HIDEOUS KINKY (15)
Through the backdrop of 1970s Morocco trends Kate Winslet's hippie single-mum with her two daughters (Bella Riza, Carrie Mullin). Meanwhile, gormless backpackers, Sufi teachers and Said Taghmaoui's love-interest weave across the narrative. West End: Clapham Picture House, Curzon Soho, Curzon Minima, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Renoir, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road. Repertory: Phoenix Cinema. And local cinemas

HILARY AND JACKIE (15)
Full-throttle playing from Rachel Griffiths and Emily Watson sustains Anand Tucker's warts-and-all biopic of the Du Pre sisters. West End: Chelsea Cinema, Curzon Soho, Odeon Swiss Cottage. Repertory: Watermans Arts Centre. And local cinemas

HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK (15)
Stella got her groove back by taking off to Jamaica with her feisty buddy (Whoopi Goldberg), sashaying around in a bikini and getting herself a little love action in the form of a man young enough to be her son. Essentially this is Shirley Valentine with an Afro-American spin. West End: Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

LITTLE VOICE (15)
Timid Jane Horrocks perfects strident Shirley Bassey/Judy Garland impersonations. Bracing black comedy. Horrocks' vocal pyrotechnics, plus a marvellously weighted turn from Michael Caine push it through to the final curtain. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road. And local cinemas

LIVING OUT LOUD (15)
See The Independent Recommends, above. West End: Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)
This gaudy swashbuckler gallops full-speed

through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas's authentically Hispanic do-gooder. West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Virgin Fulham Road, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

MULAN (U)
This animated feature about a girl who disguises herself as a soldier to spare her ailing father from the certain death of combat is one of the most visually innovative movies that Disney has ever made. West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Ritzy Cinema. And local cinemas

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (18)
See The Independent Recommends, above. West End: Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

PECKER (18)
Trash auteur John Waters swerves into sunnier streets with Pecker: his fluffily satirical tale of an amateur Baltimore photographer who is adopted as a fly-on-the-wall artist by the New York elite. Pecker goes big on blue-collar kitsch without ever making any real, stringent point. West End: Clapham Picture House, Metro, Odeon Camden Town, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

PI (15)
What sustains the film is the ingenuity of its central conceit, its ongoing "mathematics is the language of nature" mantra and too-cool-for-school demeanour. West End: ABC Pantun Street

PRACTICAL MAGIC (12)
Practical Magic sees Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman cast as two sisters raised from a line of witches and hexing any unlucky man who swings into their orbit. West End: Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)
In planning his cartoon film of Moses, DreamWorks honcho Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged it "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean". The end result ends up looking more like The Ten Commandments by way of Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat. West End: Empire Leicester Square, UCI Whiteleys. Repertory: Phoenix Cinema, Watermans Arts Centre. And local cinemas

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (15)
Steven Spielberg's Second World War drama featuring Tom Hanks and harsh, devastating battle sequences. West End: Plaza

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE (15)
See The Independent Recommends, above. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Empire Leicester Square, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

STEPMOM (12)
This sugar-glazed, oven-ready affair casts an out-of-sorts Susan Sarandon as a middle-aged matriarch squabbling over her offspring with the new model mom (Julia Roberts) that hubby Ed Harris has hooked up with. West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea. And local cinemas

TWO GIRLS AND A GUY (18)
Heather Graham and Natasha Gregson Warner are the duped girlfriends of Robert Downey Jr's love-rat prima donna. Two Girls and a Guy gives them plenty of room to move and breathe, turning the yarn into a pungent acting showcase. West End: Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket

VERY BAD THINGS (18)
Peter Berg's debut serves up swaggering gross-out comedy in a Loaded-magazine style, but it's ultimately a film with nowhere to go. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Marble Arch, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

Life is Beautiful (La Vita è Bella) (PG)
Roberto Benigni directs and stars in this tragicomic fable about an Italian Jew who tries to shield his boy from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp by pretending that the brutal regime is an elaborate game.

Shakespeare in Love (15)
This enjoyable romp suggests how romance fired Shakespeare with the creative inspiration for Romeo and Juliet. Joseph Fiennes and Gwyneth Paltrow head a multi-star cast.

Living Out Loud (15)
Holly Hunter plays a Manhattan woman who, left by her husband, befriends the elevator operator in her building. Writer Richard LaGravenese handles everything with affectionate restraint.

A Bug's Life (U)
Less sophisticated and more child-friendly than Antz, this animated feature (right) spins another enjoyable yarn about an ant colony and its battle to survive. Kevin Spacey provides the voice of the chief grasshopper.

The Opposite of Sex (18)
Christina Ricci plays 16-year-old bitch-on-wheels Dedee, who causes all kinds of havoc when she moves in with her half-brother (Martin Donovan).

ANTHONY QUINN

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

Copenhagen
(Duchess Theatre, London)
Michael Frayn's profound and haunting meditation on science, morality and the mysteries of human motivation. To 7-Aug

Oklahoma!
(Lyceum Theatre, London)
Widely regarded as the best ever, Trevor Nunn's glorious production (right) of the Rogers and Hammerstein classic fully deserves its West End transfer. To 26-Jun

The Street of Crocodiles
(Queen's Theatre, London)
Triumphant revival of Theatre de Complicite's surreal and searing plunge into the imagination of Polish-Jewish writer Bruno Schulz. To 20-Feb

The Winter's Tale (RSC, Stratford)
An amazingly rich and complex performance from Anthony Sher in Gregory Doran's Romanov-style production. In rep to 3-Mar

Darkness Falls
(Palace Theatre, Watford)
Jonathan Holloway's entertainingly creepy double-bill of ghostly chillers about our deepest wishes and the price we pay for them. To 20-Feb

PAUL TAYLOR

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Monet in the 20th Century
(Royal Academy)
He lived until 1920. The gardens and lily ponds at Giverny dissolve into elemental visions: fiery lights, haze, liquid reflections, voids and depths. The strange last works of Impressionism. To 18-Apr

Portraits by Ingres
(National Gallery)
Some of the most intense portraiture ever (right). Women: exquisite mixtures of flesh and fabric, dreams of sex and money. To 25-Apr

Patrick Caulfield (Hayward Gallery)
The modern object-world made luminous. This survey of nearly 50 years' work offers his full range - notably, those bold lacinate outlines, blocked in with translucent colour. To 11-Apr

Disasters of War
(Wolverhampton Art Gallery)
"I saw this" - three ages of European war through the etchings of Jacques Callot. Goya and Otto Dix. Visions from the blackest of times. To 20-Mar

THOMAS LUBBOCK

CINEMA

WEST END

ABC PANTON STREET
(0870-902 0404) @ Piccadilly
Circus Elizabeth 2.10pm, 5.10pm, 8.10pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm
My Name Is Joe 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.20pm, 8.40pm
A Bug's Life 1.25pm, 3.50pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm

ABC PICCADILLY
(0171-287 4322) (from 1pm) @ Piccadilly
Circus Elizabeth 2.10pm, 5.10pm, 8.10pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm
My Name Is Joe 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.20pm, 8.40pm

ABC SHAFTESBURY AVENUE
(0870-902 0402) @ Leicester Square/Tottenham Court Road
Don't Go Breaking My Heart 1.40pm, 4.05pm, 6.30pm, 8.55pm
I Think I Do 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

ABC SWISS CENTRE
(0870-902 0403) @ Leicester Square/Piccadilly Circus/Buffalo
66 2.35pm, 8.40pm
Class Trip 2.35pm, 8.40pm
A Bug's Life 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm
La Vie en Rose 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm

ABC TOTENHAM COURT ROAD
(0870-902 0414) @ Tottenham Court Road
A Bug's Life 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.25pm, 3.50pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm
The Mask of Zorro 2.35pm, 5.15pm, 8.15pm, 10.15pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.15pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm
There's Something About Mary 1.25pm, 3.50pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm

BARBICAN SCREEN
(0171-638 8891) @ Barbican Life
Beautiful 6.15pm, 8.40pm
Shakespeare in Love 6pm, 8.40pm

CHelsea CINEMA
(0171-351 8742) @ Sloane Square
Hilary and Jackie 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm

CLAPHAM PICTURE HOUSE
(0171-498 3323) @ Clapham Common
A Bug's Life 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm
Hideoous Kinky 1.30pm, 3.55pm, 7.05pm, 9.30pm
Shakespeare in Love 1.10pm, 3.45pm, 6.30pm, 9.25pm
Twas Chaisnaw Massacre 9.40pm

CURZON MAYFAIR
(0171-369 1720) @ Green Park
Life is Beautiful 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.40pm

CURZON SOHO
(0171-734 2255) (12noon-6pm) @ Leicester Square/Tottenham Court Road
Hideoous Kinky 1.30pm, 3.55pm, 7.05pm, 9.30pm
Hilary and Jackie 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9.15pm
Your Friends and Neighbors 1.15pm, 3.15pm, 5.15pm, 7.15pm, 9.30pm

EMPIRE LEICESTER SQUARE
(0990-888990) @ Leicester Square
Hideoous Kinky 1.30pm, 3.55pm, 7.05pm, 9.30pm
Hilary and Jackie 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9.15pm
Your Friends and Neighbors 1.15pm, 3.15pm, 5.15pm, 7.15pm, 9.30pm

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Hilary and Jackie 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9.15pm
Your Friends and Neighbors 1.15pm, 3.15pm, 5.15pm, 7.15pm, 9.30pm

ODEON KENSINGTON
(08705-050007) @ High Street
Kensington A Bug's Life 11.45am, 2.15pm, 4.45pm, 7.15pm, 9.45pm
Bulworth 7pm, 12.25am
Don't Go Breaking My Heart 2pm, 4.30pm, 7pm, 9.30pm, 12midnight
Enemy of the State 12.15am
Life is Beautiful (La Vita è Bella) 1pm, 3.50pm, 6.40pm, 9.30pm, 12.20am
Little Voice 1.50pm, 4.25pm, 8.45pm, 12.20am
Madeline 1.45pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9.10pm, 12.20am
The Opposite of Sex 7.10pm, 9.30pm
The Price of Egypt 11.30am, 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6.15pm, 9.15pm, 12.10pm, 12.50pm, 5.45pm, 8.30pm
Very Bad Things 9.50pm

ODEON LEICESTER SQUARE
(08705-050007) @ Leicester Square
A Bug's Life 11.45am, 2.15pm, 4.45pm, 7.15pm, 9.45pm, 11.15pm

ODEON MARBLE ARCH
(08705-050007) @ Marble Arch
A Bug's Life 11.45am, 2.05pm, 4.25pm, 6.45pm, 9.05pm
Don't Go Breaking My Heart 11.50am, 2.10pm, 4.35pm, 6.55pm, 9.15pm, 12.10pm
Enemy of the State 12.30pm, 3.20pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm
The Mask of Zorro 1.10pm, 4pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.10pm, 4pm, 6.40pm, 9.10pm, 12.10pm
Very Bad Things 9.50pm

ODEON FULHAM ROAD
(0870-907 0711) @ South Kensington
Hideoous Kinky 7.10pm, 9.20pm
Jack Frost 12noon, 2.10pm, 4.20pm, 6.30pm
Little Voice 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.20pm
Madeline 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm, 11pm, 12.10pm
The Parent Trap 12.45pm, 3.15pm, 5.25pm, 7.35pm, 9.45pm

ODEON VICTORIA ROAD
(0870-907 0711) @ South Kensington
Hideoous Kinky 7.10pm, 9.20pm
Jack Frost 12noon, 2.10pm, 4.20pm, 6.30pm
Little Voice 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.20pm
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The Parent Trap 12.45pm, 3.15pm, 5.25pm, 7.35pm, 9.45pm

CINEMA

LONDON LOCALS

ACTON
PARK ROYAL WARNER VILLAGE (0181-896 0066) @ Park Royal
Antz 10.10am, A Bug's Life 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 5.30pm, 7.30pm, 9.30pm, 11.30pm
How Stella Got Her Groove Back 8.30pm, 11.15pm
Jack Frost 12.10pm
Madeline 1.45pm, 4.30pm, 7.15pm, 10.00pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.10pm, 4.00pm, 6.50pm, 9.40pm
The Price of Egypt 2pm
Rush Hour 11.20pm
Shakespeare in Love 1.20pm, 4pm, 6.40pm, 9.35pm, 12.20am
The Siege 10.10pm, 12.40am
Star Trek: Insurrection 12.15am
Very Bad Things 9.10pm, 11.30pm

BARNET
ODEON (08705 050007) @ High Street
A Bug's Life 11.45am, 2.15pm, 4.45pm, 7.15pm, 9.45pm, 11.15pm
Don't Go Breaking My Heart 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 7.10pm, 9.15pm
Little Voice 4pm, 6.45pm, 8.45pm

EDMONTON
LEE VALLEY UCI 12 (0990-888990) @ Tottenham Hale
Antz 11.45am, 2.30pm
Babe: Pig in the City 12.30pm
Babe 11.30am, 2.30pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm, 10.30pm, 12.30pm
Don't Go Breaking My Heart 4.45pm, 7.30pm, 10.15pm, 12.40am
Enemy of the State 9.20pm, 12.10am
Hilary and Jackie 3.15pm, 6.05pm, 8.45pm
How Stella Got Her Groove Back 1.15pm, 4.05pm, 6.50pm, 9.40pm, 12.20am
Madeline 1.20pm, 4.10pm, 7.00pm, 9.50pm, 12.40pm
Meet Joe Black 8pm
My Giant 3.45pm
The Parent Trap 12noon, 2.45pm
Practical Magic 8.50pm
Rush Hour 11.30am, 12.30pm
Shakespeare in Love 12.45pm, 3.40pm, 6.40pm, 9.05pm, 11.50pm
The Siege 11.10pm
Star Trek: Insurrection 3.50pm, 6.50pm, 9.50pm, 12.50pm, 5.30pm, 8.30pm, 11.30pm, 12midnight

ELPHANT & CASTLE
CINEMAS (0181-771-703 4968) @ Elephant & Castle
A Bug's Life 11.45am, 2.30pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm, 10.30pm, 12.30pm
Don't Go Breaking My Heart 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.55pm
How Stella Got Her Groove Back 3.10pm, 5.45pm, 8.20pm

FRIDAY RADIO

RADIO 1
(97.9-98.8MHz FM)
6.30 Zoe Ball, 9.00 Simon Mayo.
12.00 Kevin Greening, 2.00 Mark Radcliffe, 4.00 Chris Moyles, 5.45 Newsbeat, 6.00 Pete Tong's Essential Selection, 9.00 Judge Jules, 11.00 Westwood - Radio 1 Rap Show, 2.00 Fabio and Grooverider, 4.00 - 7.00 Emma B.

RADIO 2
(88-90.2MHz FM)
6.00 Alex Lester, 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan, 9.30 Richard Allinson, 12.00 Jimmy Young, 2.00 Ed Stewart, 5.05 Des Lynam, 7.00 Morley at the Musicals, 7.30 Friday Night is Music Night: Introduced by Richard Baker from the Hippodrome, Golders Green, London. Roderick Dunk conducts the BBC Concert Orchestra, with guest artists Lisa Hull, Jeff Hooper, pianist Barry Booth and tenor saxophonist Iain Dixon. At 8.15, during the interval, Richard Baker introduces a disc from the Cambridge Singers, 9.45 Frankenstein, 9.30 Listen to the Band, 10.00 David Jacobs, 11.00 Believe it or Not, 12.00 Lynn Parsons, 4.00 - 6.00 Lata Sharma.

RADIO 3
(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air, 9.00 Masterworks, 10.30 Artist of the Week, 11.00 Sound Stories, See Pick of the Day, 12.00 Composer of the Week: Telemann, 1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert, (R), 2.00 The BBC Orchestras, 4.00 Music Restored, 4.45 Music Machine, 5.00 In Tune, 7.30 Performance on 3. Chris Wines introduces a concert given last night at St George's, Brandon Hill, Bristol, by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment as part of its residency there. Sophie Daneman (soprano), Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment/Monica Huggitt (violin), Rameau: Suite 'Hippolyte et Aricie', Leclair: Violin Concerto in A, Op 7 No 6, Cherubini: La malade imaginaire, Clerambault: Cantata 'La solet, vainqueur des nuages', Rameau: Suite 'Dardanus'.

PICK OF THE DAY

CONCLUDING WITH a tribute to the banana-skirt-wearing cabaret legend Josephine Baker, Sound Stories (11am R3) has Poulenc and Offenbach to help set the mood nicely.

Sunny Side Up (11.30am R4), a new comedy about the trials of a Nottingham barbershop quartet, is pitched just right, thanks to the refusal of the cast, which includes Keith Barron



DOMINIC CAVENTISH

9.20 Postscript. Five programmes celebrating 50 years of photojournalism from the world's most famous photo agency, 5: 'Cabinet of Curiosity', Gill Pyrah considers Magnum's work as art and asks what the future holds. (R)

9.45 Hanns Eisler. Holderlin settings composed in Hollywood in 1943, sung by Wolfgang Holzmair (baritone) with Peter Stamm (piano).

10.00 Hear and Now. Verity Sharp introduces 'Darkness Visible', a concert showcasing the music of Simon Holt and two leading American composers, Rolf Hind (piano), Michael Collins (clarinet), London Sinfonietta/Elgar Howarth, Morton Feldman: Why Patterns, Simon Holt: Capriccio spirale, Eco-Pavan, Elliott Carter: Clarinet Concerto, 11.30 Jazz Century, 12.00 Composer of the Week: Liszt, 1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4
(92.4-94.6MHz FM)
6.00 Today, 9.00 NEWS: Desert Island Discs, 9.45 Serial: Tulip, (R), 10.00 NEWS: Woman's Hour, 11.00 NEWS: Serenading, 11.30 Sunny Side Up. See Pick of the Day, 12.00 NEWS: You and Yours, 12.57 Weather, 1.00 The World at One, 1.30 Puzzle Panel, 2.00 NEWS: The Archers.

2.45 Afternoon Play: Lark Rise and Beyond.

3.00 NEWS: Changing Places, 3.30 Going, Going, Gone, 3.45 This Scattered Isle, 4.00 NEWS: Bookclub, 4.40 The Message, 5.00 PM, 6.00 Six O'Clock News, 6.30 The Ghost of Number Ten, 7.00 NEWS: The Archers, 7.45 Front Row. Mark Lawson with the arts programme, 7.45 Speaking for Themselves. Dramatised excerpts from the letters of Britain's greatest wartime leader and his wife Clementine, taken from the newly published collection edited by their daughter, Mary Soames. With Alex Jennings as Winston, Sylvester as Clementine, and Helen Bourne as the narrator (10/10), 8.00 NEWS: Any Questions?, Jonathan Dimbleby is joined in Alfreton, Derbyshire, by panellists including Margaret Beckett MP, Malcolm Bruce, Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman, and Tony Howard of the Times, 8.45 Letter from America. Alistair Cooke with another slice of Americana, 9.00 NEWS: The Friday Play: One Young Man. A semi-improvised drama based on the true story of Phyllis McLeod's struggle to discover the circumstances surrounding her son's death while he was on remand in Saugha Prison in September 1993. Performed by members of the family and a company of actors, introduced by Ed Stark, who, following the play, will chair a discussion of the issues raised. With Phyllis McLeod and Dawn McCormack. Written and directed by Jeremy Weller. See Pick of the Day, 10.00 The World Tonight. With Robin Lustig, 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Mark Twain Stories. 'Carnibalism in the Cars'. The train is marooned for days. No food. And it is time for supper. Kelsey Grammar reads the last of five tales, 11.00 NEWS: Late Tackles. Sports debate and journalism with Eleanor Oldroyd, 11.30 Front Page Sport, 12.00 News, 12.30 Late Book: Lemonica's Tale, 12.45 Shipping Forecast, 1.00 As World Service, 5.30 World News, 5.35 Shipping Forecast, 5.40 Inshore Forecast, 5.45 Prayer for the Day, 5.47 Leisure Update, 5.56 - 6.00 Weather.

RADIO 4 LW
(198kHz)
9.45 - 10.00 Worship, 12.00 - 12.04 News, 12.04 News, 5.54 - 5.57 Shipping Forecast, 11.30 - 6.00 Parliament.

RADIO 5 LIVE
(693, 909kHz MW)
6.00 Breakfast, 9.00 Nicky Campbell, 12.00 The Midday News, 1.00 Ruscoe and Co, 4.00 Drive, 7.00 News Extra.

7.30 Brian Moore's Sportsnight. The legendary Brian Moore sits in for Alan Green to look back on the week's sporting stories and preview the weekend's FA Cup fifth-round ties with his studio guests. Plus news of tonight's Nationwide League action.

10.00 Late Night Live. Insight and comment on the day's big issues with Brian Hayes. Including Paetrick, 10.30 Sport, 11.00 News, 11.15 The Financial World Tonight, 1.00 Up All Night, 5.00 - 6.00 Morning Reports.

Classic FM
(100.0-101.9MHz FM)
6.00 Nick Bailey, 8.00 Henry Kelly, 12.00 Requests, 2.00 Concerto: Strauss: Horn Concerto No 1 in E flat, David Pyatt, Britten: Sinfonia/Nicholas Cleverly, 3.00 Jane Markham, 6.30 Newsnight, 7.00 Smooth Classics at Seven, 9.00 Evening Concert: Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue, George Gershwin (piano roll recording), Columbia Jazz Band/Michael Tilson Thomas, William Levi Dawson: Negro Folk Symphony, Detroit SO/Neeme Jarvi, Hanson: Symphony No 2 (Romantic), St Louis SO/Leonard Slatkin, 11.00 Michael Mappin, 2.00 Concerto, 3.00 - 6.00 Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO
(125, 167-128.0kHz MW 105.8MHz FM)
6.30 Chris Evans, 9.30 Mark Forrest, 1.00 Nick Abbot, 4.00 Harriet Scott, 7.00 Wheels of Steel, 11.00 Janey Lee Grace, 2.00 - 6.00 Steve Power.

WORLD SERVICE RADIO
(198kHz LW)
1.00 The World Today, 1.30 Meridian (Books), 2.00 The World Today, 2.30 People and Politics, 3.00 The World Today, 3.20 Sports Roundup, 3.30 World Business Report, 3.45 Insight, 4.00 The World Today, 4.30 Weekend, 5.00 The World Today, 5.30 - 6.00 My Century.

TALK RADIO
6.00 David Banks and Nick Ferrari, 9.00 Scott Chisholm, 1.00 Anna Raeburn, 3.00 OK to Talk, 5.00 The SportsZone, 8.00 Jackie Mason - Live from New York, 10.00 Dave Barrett's Phone-In with the Midnight Psychic, 2.00 - 6.00 Mike Dickin.

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESS

JON SPEELMAN

IF THERE'S one thing the chess world needs more than anything else, it's a resolution of the world championship imbroglio. Following his pyrrhic victory against an exhausted Viswanathan Anand last January, Fide (Federation Internationale des Echecs), officially recognises Anatoly Karpov. Their next world championship knockout was scheduled for June/July in Las Vegas and, by not seeding anybody beyond the first couple of rounds (Karpov, remember, went straight through to the final), should have had some credibility even in the certain absence of Karpov.

But, not content with his good fortune, Karpov has been fighting tooth and claw to prolong his reign to the agreed two years by getting this postponed, and he seems to have won - for Fide have now parted company with the intended organisers. I would be pleasantly amazed if it were not held in Elista, capital of Fide and Kalmykian President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov's Republic, in the end: though the dates are anyone's guess.

Meanwhile, with Karpov only ninth on the current rating list it's generally agreed that Karpov, who became the PCA (Professional Chess Players Association) world champion following his break-away with Nigel Short in 1993 and successfully defended his title against Viswanathan Anand in 1995, is still the strongest player - and Anand the next strongest.

Last June, Alexei Shirov who had been brought in when Anand declined, won a startling victory against Vladimir Kramnik under the auspices of a new organisation, the World Chess Council (WCC) founded expressly for that purpose, which gave him the right to challenge Karpov. But the WCC foundered when the Junta Andaluza withheld its financial support. And Shirov is now in limbo, while Karpov wants a match with Anand instead.

Last Thursday, Shirov broke his silence to issue a long statement, in which he rehearsed the historical background and modestly volunteered that several other players, including Ivanchuk and Svidler, could reasonably have been selected to play Kramnik. But he pointed out that he had not received any money, let alone the \$200,000 guarantee in the event of the Karpov match founding, as stated in the incomplete contract, and he was adamant that "the only more or less serious offer" he had received was for a match in California to be split \$400,000/\$200,000, for though \$650,000/\$350,000 in Spain had been mooted, this was only verbally.

He ended: "I presume that my legitimacy as the World Championship contender is not any lower than Karpov's legitimacy as the World Champion... I have won all the matches I played since 1991 with a high score, so I feel ready to beat Karpov in match play."

What a mess! In the unlikely event of sufficient money and good-will coinciding, all could be solved, for example by a tournament of many rounds with Karpov, Anand, Shirov and the next Fide world champion; but the perceived danger of players colluding, not to mention fractious people and organisations and flying pigs, will now doubt scotch such a pipe-dream.

BRIDGE

ALAN HIRON

"YOU MISSED the last trick!" remarked South cheerfully, as he inspected dummy on this deal. Three less bridge-literate players looked puzzled and declared, after the opening lead, looked happy.

South opened One Spade and rebid Three Spades over his partner's response of Two Hearts. Wishing to make progress but with no first-round controls that could unambiguously be shown, North tried Four Clubs (possibly Five Spades was an alternative?). Now South, also ambitious (although I cannot think why) was afraid that a cue bid in hearts might be taken as showing support. He improvised with a bid of Four Diamonds! He had read somewhere that, with no bidding space left below the game level, this merely showed interest (still below game) and was described as a "last train" effort. An uncomprehending North took the bid at face value and went on to Six Spades.

Clearly a diamond lead would have scuppered the contract out of hand, but West led a trump. Declarer won, cashed $\heartsuit K$, and entered dummy twice with trumps to ruff low hearts. The 5-2 break, however, put paid to his chances of establishing his 12th trick by force. There remained one possibility.

East would be forced to retain his hearts and, if he held two of the three missing diamond honours, he would be subject to pressure.

With this in mind, South played off his remaining trumps and followed with three rounds of clubs. East now had to discard from $\heartsuit Q10 \diamond A J$. If he parted with $\heartsuit J$ he would be thrown in to lead a heart, so he made a good try by discarding $\heartsuit A$. Now came $\heartsuit Q$ from dummy, pinning East's jack, and South's ten and nine both became tricks. It was a good example of what is called a "winkle" squeeze.

Love all; dealer South	
North	
$\heartsuit Q 10 9$	
$\spadesuit A J 9 6 4$	
$\diamondsuit Q 7$	
$\clubsuit K Q 10$	
West	East
$\spadesuit 5 4 3 2$	$\heartsuit none$
$\heartsuit 3 2$	$\spadesuit Q 10 8 7 5$
$\diamondsuit K 8 5 3$	$\heartsuit A J 2$
$\clubsuit 8 6 5$	$\spadesuit 9 7 4 3 2$
South	
$\heartsuit A K J 8 7 6$	
$\heartsuit K$	
$\diamondsuit 10 9 6 4$	
$\clubsuit A J$	

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

PURISTS WERE UP in arms about the very idea of setting William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet (10.05pm Sky Premier) among the contemporary gang culture of California. But surely even they can't have complained about the end product, a compellingly vivid reading which introduced the play to a younger generation who might never have come across it otherwise. The director Baz Luhrmann, who enjoyed an earlier unexpected hit with



JAMES RAMPTON

48.55-52.20 Speed Crash Rescue! (829158), 10.00 War and Civilization (829476), 11.00 Classic Story of the SAS (876892), 12.00 The Bounty Hunter (829074), 1.00 Treasure Hunters (868872), 1.30 Wheel Muts (889023), 2.00 Close.

SKY ONE
7.00 Court Ducks (829163), 7.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (22454), 8.30 Hollywood Squares (23890), 9.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (78305), 10.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show (7702), 11.00 Gullit (8438), 12.00 Jenny Jones (80015), 1.00 Mad about You (8454), 1.30 Jeopardy (82920), 2.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (22454), 3.00 Jenny Jones (8457), 4.00 Gullit (7980), 5.00 Star Trek Voyager (4947), 6.00 Gullit (825), 6.30 Friends (283), 7.00 The Simpsons (567), 7.30 The Simpsons (8075), 8.00 Beat the Crusher (2292), 8.30 When Animals Attack I (1233), 9.00 Cops (5725), 11.00 Friends (82908), 11.30 Star Trek Voyager (4744), 12.30 The Commish (3365), 1.30 - 7.00 Long Play (782834).

SKY SPORTS 1
6.30 Futures in Sport (89473), 7.00 Sky Sports Centre (84498), 7.30 World Wrestling Federation Superstars (57863), 8.45 You're on Sky Sports (233454), 9.00 Racing News (2289), 9.30 Aerobics - Oz Style (8281), 10.00 Euro Tour Golf (103102), 1.00 Golf (56522), 4.00 Boxing - Big Fight Club (82223), 4.30 Trans World Sport (4028), 5.30

What a Weekend (198), 6.00 Sky Sports Centre (84498), 7.00 Boxing - Big Fight Countdown (767), 7.30 Euro Tour Golf (7842), 8.00 Sky Sports Centre (84498), 9.00 Boxing - Big Fight Countdown (4693), 11.30 Hold the Back Page (8034), 12.30 MotoGP - 1995, 1.00 - 7.00 Golf (423077).

SKY SPORTS 2
10.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (84475), 7.30 International Cricket Australia vs England (236301), 8.30 Spanish Football (237028), 10.00 Football League Review (239118), 1.30 What a Weekend (822367), 2.00 The Rugby Club (224722), 3.00 International Cricket (228893), 6.00 Inside the Senior PGA Tour (82676), 6.30 Extreme Sailing (825828), 7.00 Friday Night Football Roadshow vs Hull City (933473), 10.00 Ford Golf USA (89588), 11.00 Friday Night Football Roadshow vs Hull City (121058), 1.30 Sky Sports Centre (84498), 2.30 International Cricket (238835), 3.30 - 6.00 Extreme Sailing (782908).

SKY SPORTS 3
11.30 Futures in Sport (785858), 12.00 Transworld Sport (870809), 1.00 Fish TV: Tight Lines (870809), 2.00 Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook (848783), 3.30 Ice Hockey (783583), 6.00 Glennie World Soccer (8784016), 6.30 MotoGP (878567), 7.00 International Cricket (778544), 10.00 World Wrestling (778522), 12.00 Close.

EUROSPORT
7.30 Snowboard (2267), 8.00 Ski Jumping (83009), 9.00 Alpine Skiing (1973), 10.00 Biathlon (1160), 11.00 Biathlon (7916), 12.00 Racing Line (2383), 12.30 Car on Ice (8076), 1.00 Snowboard (7912), 1.30 Alpine Skiing (7947), 2.30 Biathlon (1974), 3.30 Tennis (8282), 4.30 Alpine Skiing (8788), 6.30 Tennis (8472), 6.00 Alpine Skiing (8784), 8.30 Alpine Skiing (8784), 9.30 Rally (8251), 10.00 Boxing (8883), 11.00 Playfite (42305), 11.30 Voz Action (1102), 12.30 Close.

UK GOLD
10.00 Crossroads (775222), 7.30 Neighbours (899909), 7.55 EastEnders (80747), 8.30 The Bill (807503), 9.00 The Bill (807503), 9.30 When the Boat Comes In (802223), 10.30 Rhoda (807406), 11.00 Dallas (405728), 11.55 Neighbours (788522), 12.25 EastEnders (785473), 1.00 Juliet Bravo (198378), 2.00 Dallas (878034), 2.55 The Bill (800223), 3.25 The Bill (800223), 3.55 EastEnders (807402), 4.30 Rhoda (800015), 5.00 All Creatures Great and Small (482086), 6.00 Dynasty (336534), 7.00 The Comedy Alternative: Spontaneous Children (23857), 7.40 Dad's Army (732212), 8.00 The Detectives (830728), 8.30 The Thin Blue Line (854805), 9.40 Knowing Me, Knowing You: With Alan Partridge (222290), 10.20 Ruby Wax Meets... Sharon Stone

REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

C1 N IRELAND
BBC1 London except: 6.30 Asline 6.30 (257)

C1 SCOTLAND
BBC1 London except: 12.30 It's a Family (Mouse and Mole) 3.58-4.00, 12.35 Oran O'Connell and Rhymer (265753), 12.40 Irish Post (Postman Pat) (5687702), 9 News (257), 6.30 Reporting Scotland: Weather (257), 10.55 Film: White Heat (803663), 12.40 The Grand Show (533329), 1.40 The Big End (2557), 1.45 News BBC News 24 (73455).

C1 WALES
BBC1 London except: 6.30 As Today (257).

GLIA
Carlton except: 12.30 Angela and Weather (858183), 1.00 Island Street (951365), 1.35 Home Away (238583), 2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (533454), 3.20 Angela and Weather (120418), 3.40 News (75541), 6.00 Angela and Weather (120418), 6.30 On the Beat (Track) 1, 10.30 Angela News and Weather (89), 10.40 Film: Judgement in

Berlin (1218573), 12.30 Private TV (4881), 1.00 Film: Psycho IV: The Beginning (23222), 2.40 The Haunted Flat (84482), 3.30 New Baywatch (305022), 4.00 Trisha (8288), 5.00 Coronation Street (72435).

CENTRAL
As Carlton except: 12.30 Central News and Weather (858183), 1.00 Wish You Were Here...? (1122), 3.20 Central News (120418), 5.40 Shortland Street (827453), 6.40 News: Weather (75541), 6.00 Home and Away (238583), 6.25 Central News and Weather (858183), 10.30 Central News and Weather (858183), 10.40 Film: Caddyshack II (847833), 4.05 Juddrider (81871), 5.20 Asian Eye (722834).

HTV WALES
As Carlton except: 10.30 This Morning (115522), 12.15 HTV News (78425), 1.00 Wish You Were Here...? (1122), 1.30 Home and Away (53947), 2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (533454), 3.20 HTV News (120418), 5.40 A Country Practice (827453), 6.00 Home and Away (238583), 6.25 Wales Tonight (858183), 10.30 HTV News (120418), 10.45 Welsh Agenda Debate (84537), 11.45 Videotech (89893).

2.45 Soundtrax (857348), 12.30 Private TV (4881), 1.00 Film: Psycho IV: The Beginning (23222), 2.40 The Haunted Flat (84482), 3.30 New Baywatch (305022), 4.00 Trisha (8288), 5.00 Coronation Street (72435).

HTV WEST
As Carlton except: 1.00 Shortland Street (1122), 6.25 HTV West Weather (31990), 6.30 The West Tonight (947), 10.45 Videotech (89893), 11.45 Bob Morrison on Campus (83880).

MERIDIAN
As Carlton except: 10.30 This Morning (115522), 12.15 Meridian News and Weather (78425), 1.00 Shortland Street (858183), 1.35 Home and Away (53947), 2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (533454), 3.20 Meridian News and Weather (858183), 5.37 The Listings (84270), 5.40 News: Weather (75541), 6.00 Meridian Tonight (858183), 10.30 Meridian News and Weather (858183), 10.45 Dream Town (40080), 11.45 Crowded House Farewell to the World Concert (83890), 12.15 Soundtrax (857348), 12.30 Private TV (4881), 1.00 Film: Psycho IV: The Beginning (23222), 2.40 The Haunted Flat (84482).

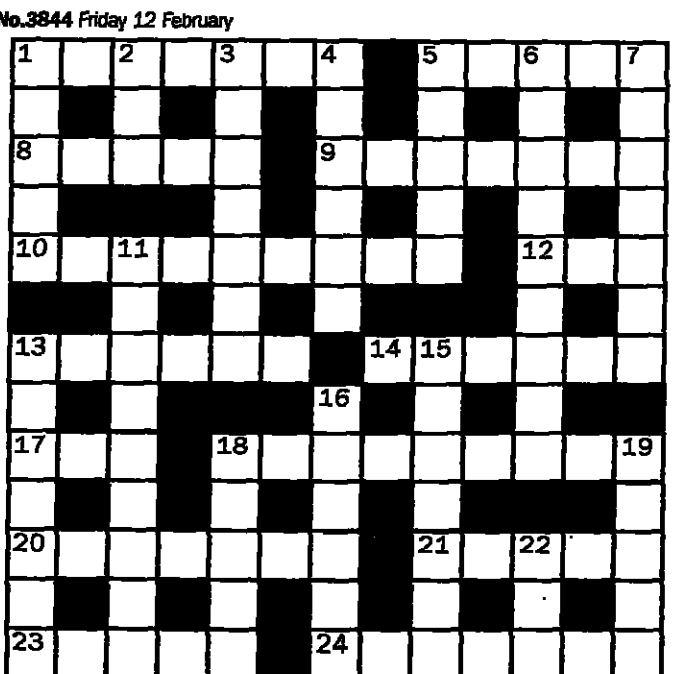
3.40 New Baywatch (305022), 4.00 Trisha (8288), 5.00 FreeScreen (72435).

WESTCOUNTRY
As Carlton except: 10.30 This Morning (115522), 12.15 Westcountry News (78425), 12.27 Illuminations (858183), 6.00 Westcountry Live (858183), 6.30 Westcountry News (84564), 10.45 The Other Side (40009), 11.45 Renegade (74839), 12.30 Tales from the Darkside (725384), 12.35 Private TV (4881), 1.00 News Headlines (120418), 2.40 The Haunted Flat (84482), 3.30 New Baywatch (305022), 4.00 Trisha (8288), 5.00 Coronation Street (72435).

YORKSHIRE
As Carlton except: 10.30 This Morning (115522), 12.15 Calendar News and Weather (78425), 1.00 Home and Away (53947), 1.25 The Jerry Springer Show (533454), 2.40 Emmerdale (787826), 3.20 Calendar News Headlines (120418), 5.40 News: Weekend Weather (827453), 5.55 Calendar (89725), 6.30 Tonight (947), 10.30 Calendar News and Weather (858183).

TYNE TEES
As Yorkshire except: 12.15 North East News and Weather (78425), 3.20

CONCISE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1 Wandering (7)
 - 5 Is aware of (5)
 - 8 Breakfast food (5)
 - 9 Follow a winding course (7)
 - 10 Contrive without preparation (9)
 - 12 Frequently (poet.) (3)
 - 13 Extol (6)
 - 14 Enthusiasm (6)
 - 17 Fuss (3)
 - 18 Desert features (4,5)
 - 20 Old wine-jar (7)
 - 21 Engine (5)
 - 23 Brief (5)
 - 24 Swagger (7)
- DOWN**
- 1 Religious teacher (5)
 - 2 Part of circle (3)
 - 3 Resulting from volcanic action (7)
 - 4 Opening strategy in chess (6)
 - 5 Playing card (5)
 - 6 Casual worker (3,6)
 - 7 Slight wound (7)
 - 11 Thick fog (3,6)
 - 13 Countryman (7)
 - 15 Belly (7)
 - 16 Pitch tents (6)
 - 18 Glimpsed (5)
 - 19 Suit material (5)
 - 22 Nervous reaction (3)
- Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:**
- ACROSS: 1 Funny, 4 Colours (Punctual), 8 Undean, 9 Siren, 10 Dread, 11 Aspects, 13 East, 15 Rounds, 17 Orator, 20 Tape, 22 Anxious, 24 Sleep, 26 Cream, 27 Immense, 28 Theatre, 29 Dishes, DOWN: 1 Rounder, 2 Numb, 3 Yielded, 4 Canvas, 5 Lairs, 6 Upright, 7 Sins, 12 Stop, 14 Acid, 16 Umbles, 18 Reunited, 19 Replenish, 21 Active, 23 Ascot, 25 Temp, 26 Error.

